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ENGLAND TO-DAY

A SOCIAL STUDY OF OUR TIME

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SB 5940!

BY

GEORGE A. GREENWOOD

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

A. G. GARDINER

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INTRODUCTION

When, a decade or so ago, Mr. Charles Masterman wrote his two books, *In Peril of Change* and *The Condition of England*, he gave a picture of a society that was visibly approaching a crisis. A century of astonishing industrial prosperity, and of almost uninterrupted political progress, so far from having brought back the Golden Age, had produced a society afflicted with grave and deep-rooted disorders. The anomalies of riches and poverty exceeded anything in the experience of a modern community. The commercial supremacy enjoyed for generations, if no longer unchallenged, was still decisive, and its fruits were represented by a national wealth of almost incalculable magnitude.

But side by side with this overflowing abundance there co-existed a mass of impoverished life, herded in towns, enjoying few of the amenities of existence, plunged into want by every recurrent depression in trade. Investigations carried out by Charles Booth, Seebohm Rowntree, Lady Hugh Bell and others, had thrown a disquieting flood of light upon the conditions in which the industrial classes lived in the great manufacturing towns. The proportion of the poor who occupied one- or two-room tenements in some towns exceeded half the total population. In rural England the position was hardly better.

Wages were inconceivably low, and the housing conditions were a scandal.

The reaction of all this upon the physical and moral condition of the people, revealed in torrents of official statistics, occasioned widespread concern, and the striking analyses by Sir L. Chiozza Money and other economists, of the inequalities in the distribution of the wealth of the country as between a small possessing class and the mass of the people, gave impetus to the growing discontent of Labour. An ominous spirit of insurgence was abroad, no longer checked by the moral police of the churches, and stimulated by a distrust of the Parliamentary institution as an adequate instrument of social justice.

The crisis which Mr. Masterman foreshadowed has come. He conceived of it coming from within, but it came from without, in a blast of violence unprecedented in history. The war, and the no less devastating peace that has followed the war, have involved the world in a common catastrophe. Europe is strewn with the wreckage of a civilization, and in the general convulsion, this country has been shaken to its foundations with the rest. We are too near the centre of the storm, too overwhelmed by the vast displacement of the masonry that sustained the fabric of things in the past, to form a just estimate of the havoc that has been wrought, or to forecast the new society that will ultimately emerge out of the ruins of the old. The surface of our life still heaves with enormous disturbances, and ideas are in the melting pot. International relations are more incalculable than they have ever been, and industrial and social conditions are taking shapes

that can only be dimly discerned where they can be discerned at all. The movement of events is so rapid, and is subject to the shaping of so many obscure and often remote forces, that the contours of things change with perplexing suddenness.

In these circumstances, the attempt to take a survey of the conditions of England—difficult at all times—is peculiarly hazardous. Before the tendency observed is noted it may have given place to a wholly different tendency. One may almost date the writing of certain passages in this book by a phase of events which came suddenly, and has gone as suddenly as it came. This is not a defect in the book: it is in a real sense one of its virtues. It presents a picture of a nation in upheaval, surging to and fro with little conscious sense of direction, dazed and bewildered by the loss of its ancient landmarks and the weakening of its normal sanctions. It is the picture of a journalist, swiftly noting down the observed facts of an episode that is passing before his eyes, rather than the record of an historian dealing with events in perspective, or a situation that has developed and awaits the *dénouement.*

In offering an impression of so vast a disturbance operating over so wide a field, the author naturally challenges the impressions of the reader who sees the same drama from another angle, but whatever disagreements in detail one may have with the writer, his outlook will win the confidence which clear vision and an honest mind never fail to command, and though his predilections are obvious they do not warp or colour his record. "England To-day" is an England in an unprecedented moment of transition, but beneath the changing and tumult-

ous surface of things the writer sees the curren of a healthy and virile people still manifest, and in that assurance looks forward with confidence to the "England of To-Morrow." And, in spite of the Dean of St. Paul's, the general sense of the reader will be with him, if for no other reason than that we cannot afford to despair of our destiny.

A. G. GARDINER.

PREFACE

This book was completed in the late autumn of 1921. Seven years ago society was shaken to its foundations by the world-war. More than three years ago the Armistice was signed; a few months later, the combatants made a formal peace. Everybody, I suppose, daily becomes more conscious of the fact that these events changed definitely the structure of our civilization. Can one name a single walk of life in which their influences are not now being felt? One cannot. In England the war played the strangest and most unexpected tricks with social order and relations. It made poor men rich and rich men poor; it made famous sons of famous fathers privates in the ranks of the army, and it made former miners and agricultural workers majors, colonels and generals. It established some industries and destroyed others. Some men it exalted; some it banished to the wilderness. So, also, it changed the face of the world. It changed England's place in and her relations with the world.

More has happened during the past seven years than would probably have happened in a century of normal and undisturbed development. What has been the effect of it all? Just what influence has it exercised on the minds and lives of Englishmen of every class? To what extent has it changed

our thoughts and habits? Are we, as a community, developing on the same lines as those which seemed, in 1914, to be determining our future, or has the world-struggle set us upon new paths? Finally, to what do we seem to be moving?

These are some of the questions which this book discusses, and seeks to answer. I can imagine that there will be many expressions of surprise at the apparent daring of a man who would undertake, at such a moment and in such a compass, this task. There will be the objection that we cannot yet see and judge the events of the past seven years in their proper perspective; that in any case not one, but a dozen, books would be required adequately to describe and discuss the social revolution that is yet proceeding. Against such inevitable criticisms and objections, I would plead the great need of understanding now the immediate past that we may rightly meet the present, and prepare for the immediate future; and in excuse for brevity, I would say that living in an age when they are so pressed with duties, people are much more likely to read and to mark one volume than an encyclopædia.

Here, at any rate, is an effort by one whose profession has trained him to watch the phenomena which surround him, and to record with fidelity his impressions and judgments, to set down the many factors which seem to be shaping our ends as a nation. Those who have the leisure and the mind to do it may take some of the analyses, observations and deductions which follow, and conduct their own more detailed survey.

If it may seem that undue attention is here paid

to the workers compared with the more summary treatment of the other classes, one can only say that overwhelming numbers are with them, and that in the things that really matter, they give manifestations of greatest change. When to these truths is added the fact that power to determine the future of England is rapidly passing into their hands, a more comprehensive study of their characteristics seems thoroughly to be justified. And there is the final point that this book could not end upon a note of hope for England were it not that the mass, with all its imperfections, exhibits so many of the qualities that lead us to love our human kind.

My thanks are due, and are gladly tendered, to the several friends who have assisted, by advice and encouragement, in the preparation of this book for the press. I have also to acknowledge the kindness of the Editor of the *World's Work* in giving permission to use passages from articles which have already appeared in its pages.

G. A. G.

February, 1922.

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ENGLAND TO-DAY

CHAPTER I

THE NEW DEMOCRACY

1. *The Mass in its Mould.*

How much we think we know, but how little we really do know, of the English working classes, massed in the great centres of population. Any attempt at analysis, induced by close observation of, and concern for, the agglomeration which we call the people, is an attempt to describe a great variety of conditions, emotions and experiences. The ramifications are so extensive that even a preliminary survey of the task forces one to realize that by no human skill could it be made all-embracing and perfect.

But there are occasions when it should be attempted, for these are the people who constitute England. The average unit, in the average town, engaged in the average calling, represents at least six-sevenths of the total population of the British islands. So much has the incredible expansion of the great industrial machine done for us in the course of little more than a century. Gathered into the

cities, the towns, and the well-populated villages are the souls who constitute the human cog in this monster, which is for ever extending its dominance over mankind. In the age of the world they are still a new, a novel and immature phenomenon. Every conceivable factor is at work influencing them first this way, then that way; in a word they are yet a great mass, their destiny being shaped in a mould of mystery and magic which seems in some extraordinary fashion to be capable of infinite change, and which guards jealously the secret of how it will ultimately fashion its contents.

The mass itself is as varied as the influences at work upon it. There are so many grades, in essentials so far removed from each other, that it is true to say that they have hardly anything in common, save, perhaps, dependence for their livelihood upon an identical economic system. The moderately well-paid engineer with his wife and family in a comfortable home in a typical provincial town has, for example, an existence totally removed from that of the East-end labourer. Or visualize, if you can, the sharp and indeed fundamental contrast between the Welsh steel worker, comfortably off, as workers go, and the Manchester seamtress. These are instances which illustrate, as completely as one could hope, how widely even the workers themselves differ, and the extent of one's task in essaying a picture of contemporary England as represented by the human element. The result will necessarily be no beautifully ordered canvas, but rather a maze of individual scenes, pretty much like those famous composite cartoons

which record for a blasé world the daily doings in the village of the imps. All that will denote a common bond will be the thread of their common origin, linking up the patches into one entire whole.

Although in little more than a hundred years the total population and the venue of its settlement has so entirely changed, a fact which must deeply impress any student of the past and investigator of the present is how much less, in the things that really matter, is the effect of that social change upon the people. Consider some of the most outstanding incidents that have occurred during the past quarter of a century—the South African War; the epoch-making election of 1906; the series of national strikes between 1910 and 1914, which to many seemed to herald the advent of a revolutionary, class-conscious proletariat; more important than anything else, think of the prodigious disturbance of the Great War, reverberating in every channel of social activity and touching us all in the most intimate fashion.

Some of these events have had a profound influence upon the minds and lives of the people. New problems have arisen; there are new ways of looking at the old ones; imaginations have been stirred; there is a new orientation of thought and of outlook; there is, in fact, a new condition of affairs in England which it is the main purpose of this book to examine and to discuss. But so far as the material condition of the mass is concerned, nothing could be more sure than the fact that the England that was to a great extent still is. For the countless thousands, life proceeds in very much

the same fashion as it did twenty-five years ago. In city, in town and in populous village, in the same type of modest cottage, in the same dreary and endless rows of drab depressing houses; in the same reeking slum or towering tenement; so continues the life of this fourth generation of the ever-growing army of toil.

The majority of those who essay an intimate and meticulous examination of the lives of the multitude are compelled to fall back upon Government statistics, upon the recorded experiences of men and women who have been engaged in some specialized form of investigation; or upon the enlightening and revealing cases which from time to time come before the police courts, and are reproduced in the columns of the newspapers. So to an extent must anyone who seeks to describe contemporary England rely upon the facts, figures, and experiences of those who have devoted a great deal of their time to the interpretation of the lives of the toilers. It happens, however, that some of us are able to draw upon personal contact with the mass—some of us who have, in fact, lived their life, or at least shared it for a time, and at closest quarters observed its comings and goings, the details of working, eating, sleeping and pleasure-seeking which constitute its dominating factors. My own experience is based mainly upon the first twenty years of my life, spent in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and several subsequent years passed in the Welsh coalfield—two great and typical centres of the industrial population. It has fixed in my mind a picture of mighty settlements of men, women and children, engaged in a continuous

struggle for survival, a struggle with economic necessity, with ignorance, with domestic tragedy, with a thousand and one things which, seeming to lend colour and novelty to their existence, yet make it a hazardous and anxious adventure. In the year immediately preceding the outbreak of the war, the (approximately) four million trade unionists, who, taking each one as the "head" of an average family of five, represented twenty million souls, were working for a weekly wage which rarely amounted to more than 30 shillings, and which probably averaged for all male workers at the close of 1913, less than 25 shillings per week. It has been the fashion to represent organised labour since that time as a rapacious force, utilizing its power in a national emergency to levy tribute on the rest of the nation for the purpose of squandering swollen wages upon riotous living. It may at once be admitted that certain classes of labour were able definitely to raise their actual income in the terms of its purchasing value, but exactly how the average income of the average worker fared may be gathered from the fact that while, at the end of 1920, the cost of living stood at 169 per cent. above the pre-war figure, the advance in wages per man stood at something like 20 points below it. And, since in certain large industries, the increase was considerably above the average, it follows that in others the increase must have been a great deal lower. We are faced more than three years after the signing of the Armistice with an industrial population whose material condition is for all practical purposes identical with that of the pre-war days.

Some of its members are better off than they were before; others are definitely worse off.

2. *Its Struggle for Life.*

The first thought and need of the human being, whatever his station or fate in life, is shelter. And the provision of it takes a very considerable sum from the weekly income. In 1914 the family which occupied a house of three rooms in the provinces paid an average rent of 4s. 4½d. per week; in London, 7s. 3d. Those more ambitious occupying four rooms paid respectively 5s. 0½d. and 8s. 9d., and in the rare case of five rooms, the expenditure rose to 6s. and 10s. 9d.[1]

For these sums they occupied, and continue, if they are fortunate enough, to occupy, abodes variable according to that part of England which holds them. In urban areas you will find a proportion of cottages which are probably picturesque, but frequently pestilential. A greater number are of a more desirable type, with two rooms below and three above, set, perhaps, in a pretty garden and possessing at the rear a spacious stretch of ground which yields the domestic vegetables. These houses are largely to be found in and around the kindly old towns south of the Yorkshire Border, represented

[1] Board of Trade Inquiry into the cost of living, 1912. Increased rent has been one of the least serious items in the workers' budget since that time, but it has been offset by the much larger advance in the cost of boots and clothing.

by Warwick, Hereford, Shrewsbury, Norwich, Worcester, Gloucester and Rugby. They produce a people at once hardy, thrifty, stolid, long-enduring, a powerful support of the existing order and distrustful of change.

Go to the great manufacturing centres and there you are confronted by the most impressive structural monument of the age that produced them, the interminable and hideous rows of mean houses, with one general living room below and two above, built as many as fifty together, end upon end, huddled beneath the shadow of black factory walls, of the slag heap of a mine, dumped upon mother earth without a suggestion of deliberate foresight and proclaiming emphatically a day when town planning was wholly unknown or wholly ignored. These wretched abodes are not all alike. In Leeds, for example, you will find over 70,000 of the back-to-back variety, the majority of the blocks abutting on both sides on to the flagged pavement, with the domestic offices in some cases as far as 50 yards away. Their replicas exist—many thousands more—in nearly every town of the north, bare, repelling shells, without an inch of garden, and innocent of a neighbouring tree. Birmingham and Sheffield, Newcastle and Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester, Bradford and Hull, all these immense human hives vary only in a slight extent, save perhaps that in some cases the houses have two rooms on the ground floor, and below Sheffield, fewer are built back to back. Moving westwards and approaching the great Welsh coalfield, one is confronted with an entirely new manifestation of these dreadful conditions. There, save in Scotland (and even

in Scotland the terror is not nearly so widespread), the housing of the people challenges the power of the most lurid description. The great proportion of the people are condemned to a desolation that can hardly be better than death—an existence in old, insanitary, ill-smelling homes, ranged sometimes in endless rows on the plains, sometimes in hideous groups on the hillsides. They are mainly jerry-built; they are often approached by roads once started but never finished; they are nearly all destitute of gardens, and they have either a minimum of domestic conveniences or none at all. For two years I lived in a populous Swansea valley town which had hundreds of yards of open sewers and gullies, and an infantile death rate of 127 per thousand, compared with Letchworth's 54·5. "The housing condition in Wales is a national scandal," declared Sir Ellis Griffith, Bart., M.P., in 1911. "What will it profit us?" asked the *South Wales Daily News* in the same year, "to win Disestablishment and Home Rule if the homes of the people remain in a condition of squalor and degradation?" In the year 1919, whilst engaged in a course of inquiry in the coalfield, I stayed in the home of a Rhondda miner which contained only four rooms for six persons. But that was trifling compared with a case near by, of a four-roomed house which sheltered four families. Another house in the neighbourhood with only two diminutive rooms up and down held a father and mother and eight children. One wretched evening, the rain coming down in a sheet, I found myself in the home of a miner in a remote village. It consisted of one room downstairs, and two above. The father, who saw service

overseas, had just returned with his two young sons from the pit, and there were three younger children in the house. A meal had just been finished; the empty greasy dishes remained on the table, innocent of a cover; and the wife and mother was preparing before the fire the tubs for the begrimed workers. Never shall I forget the squalor, confusion, and chaos of that house; but how could it be otherwise in such restricted space and under conditions so handicapping? All the evils resulting from these tragic conditions have been intensified a hundredfold by the hold up, for nearly seven years, of all new housebuilding, and the gross overcrowding which has naturally resulted. There are thousands of beds in Wales which are literally never empty. For eight hours during the day they are occupied by one man who works on the night shift, for another eight hours by another member of the family on a different shift, and at night by wife, sisters or daughters.

Amid these congestions of squalor and decay has been reared the England that is, and is now being reared the England to be. The people who had no part in determining their unhappy environment are themselves shaped and determined by it—their brawn and brain and temper and spirit. It has produced a C3 race, thinly veneered with the virile manhood for which we have to thank our remnant population in the countryside, and the well-set towns which fringe thereon. The revelations as to disease and death which confronted the late Lord Rhondda, when at the height of the war he went to the Local Government Board, turned that prince of commerce into an agitator

and a crusader, lashing out in a fury of indignation at the senseless and criminal waste of human life, and calling, with the full measure of his power and authority, for the abolition of the social evils that provoked it. And the men who struggle on amid conditions so disquieting bear upon their backs this amazing civilization of ours. They hew coal, smelt iron, build ships and go down to the sea in them; they lay our railways, throw up our bridges, drive our engines, spin our yarns, and weave our cloth. They constitute the real effort of England, and it is by their labour that our amazing wealth and commercial prestige persists. A generation yet to come, reading of the toll of sickness and disease that its forbears paid, will remain to marvel at the material triumphs which they so signally attained.

How, in these homes, do the people live? Next to shelter, the inexorable demand of the human being is food, and rent and food, as a rule, absorb something like two-thirds of the income of the working-class family. The poorer it is, the greater is its proportionate expenditure on the needs of the stomach. For example, though the steel smelter may be comparatively well fed, actually one-fifth of the income of the poorest London out-worker is spent on bread and flour, and in times of stress even the family of the artisan has to make acquaintance with severe economy, if not actual shortage, in order that the communal income may meet all the demands upon it. In this domestic sphere so much, indeed nearly all, depends upon the woman. In the first place she usually commands the spending forces of the family—not

merely the housekeeping allowance of the woman in more fortunate classes, but the whole income from husbands, sons or daughters. Obviously these women have varying capacities for their task. These varying capacities have been very thoroughly described by Lady Bell, in her valuable study of the Middlesbrough workers.[1] There she shows that some are wise managers both of money and the home generally, and others are bad ones. I myself knew some with never more than £3 10s. a week at their disposal who, by dint of the most careful planning of this amount, contrive in some way to provide a sufficiency of wholesome food for the household, to maintain it in decent clothing, to give the wage-earner three or four shillings a week pocket-money, and to put by a trifle for the rainy days which must surely come. On the other hand, I know of households with double that weekly income which are ill-nourished, badly clad, hopelessly in debt, and will probably never be out of it. Some of these cases are due to the fact that the wage-earner does not hand over his weekly packet to his wife, but spends a great deal of his money in doubtful pleasures, but others are traceable to the inability of the woman at the helm. It has to be remembered, however, that very frequently she is beset with difficulties for which she is not responsible, and before which the woman of the well-to-do classes would collapse. Even the problem confronting the woman in the three-roomed back-to-back house in the manufacturing towns of the north, whose one room below is scullery, kitchen, washhouse, nursery, dining-room

[1] *At the Works.*

and drawing-room, pales into significance by the side of the truly unhappy lot of the woman in the two-roomed tenement in London, Glasgow or Manchester. In nearly all cases, however, there is a minimum of convenience for cooking, baking, washing and all other domestic tasks. It is really a life of slavery. "'Tis washing, scouring, cooking, cleaning an' yawling all day long," says Dave Perring, that remarkable fisherman friend of the late Mr. Stephen Reynolds "You take the missis there. If her hadn't had the courage to keep on, day an' night, where should us lot ha' been? Yet I've a-comed in 'fore now an' feeled sick wi' it—fair sick o' it, I've been, for to see it like it. You look at our kitchen in the morning—boots about, soap about, water about, cooking about, the missis there jawing an' the kids chattering an' scrapping like kids will. . . . What's lacking most of all in poor-class houses is convenience." [1]

The most tragic example of how these conditions prevent even many women with the will from exercising the most necessary domestic economy is to be found in the Welsh mining areas. The home, as a rule, is wretchedly ill-equipped for cooking purposes, and the changing hours of a man's shift; the probability that two or three members of one household (including lodgers) are all working at different times; the fact that for all these workers baths have to be provided; that in thousands of cases the water has to be carried in from standpipes on the roadways and heated on the kitchen fire; and that there are the constant wants of the children demanding attention;

[1] *"Seems So!"*

all this means that if the women had the elementary facilities, they simply have not got the time to prepare fresh, wholesome meals. Consequently there is a wholesale resort to tinned goods. My amazement at the thousands of empty meat, fish and fruit receptacles I see on the tips in colliery areas never ends. It is a wasteful, unhealthy way of living, and it is largely responsible for the stories one hears of the miners' extravagance. But it is as intelligible as it is deplorable.

And here is an illustration of the folly of the social reformers who believe that all one has to do to improve the lot of the workers is to give them more wages. Years ago Mr. Bernard Shaw warned his friends of the danger of giving £5 a week to men who had not been taught how to spend £2. He has since been strongly supported by the group of trained investigators who in 1919 gave us the most stimulating and informing study of working-class life, based upon their experiences in Sheffield, which has been issued in recent years.[1] These young people, profoundly sympathetic to the mass, say :[2] " Is it not time the Labour Party recognized officially what every member of it knows privately, that we effect not a reform but a demoralization by the naked gift of extra money or leisure to people unfitted for its use ? Those who deny the truth of this statement should make themselves better acqauinted with the effects of the increased wages paid to certain sections of the workers during the war." A sudden accession of comparative

[1] *The Equipment of the Workers.* (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.) [2] Page 15.

riches to an ill-managed household inevitably induces a sense of extravagance totally out of proportion to the actual increase in the domestic exchequer. There is frequently a resort to luxuries, bought for the sheer joy of possessing them, before actual necessities. Tawdry flummeries, altogether useless, and totally out of place in an artisan's home, find their way there, and the advance in the family income confers no lasting benefit upon it. Nor is it always the ill-managed home which suffers in this way. "It is a matter of common experience," says Lady Bell, "that the household that is managed admirably when it is necessary to consider every penny has, with a sudden increase of wages, fallen on evil days; the desperate tense strain of incessant economy being a little relaxed, the unfamiliar possibility of spending has been allowed to go too far."

Just what the struggle on the poverty line involves no writer could hope adequately to convey. It must be endured, or at least witnessed, at first hand. In no other way can any man or woman, however moved by sympathy, realize what it means. In normal times, when the husband is working and the income is certain, the problem facing the wife and mother of gathering up all the ends of the domestic exchequer and making them somehow meet places upon her a very heavy burden. Two-thirds of the income having been consumed in rent and food, there is clothing for four or five persons to be bought, coal, gas, insurance, washing materials and odds and ends, and the inevitable wear and tear of the home to be budgetted for. It necessitates for the purchase of a pair of boots

for one member of the family careful saving over three weeks or a month. The husband's suit or the wife's dress involves a sinking fund stretched over half a year or more. And the absolute need of making every garment, every article in domestic use, last out to the uttermost day demands incessant mending, patching and remaking which robs the energetic and capable woman of any real leisure she would otherwise get.

But that condition of things postulates the comparative prosperity of a working husband and a healthy family. What, does one imagine, happen in the times of sickness, accident, death, improvidence and unemployment? What hitherto has been a struggle with great odds then becomes a grim fight for mere existence. The man who appears outwardly well and strong one day comes home from the mill or the mine feeling not up to the mark. The employer, in such conditions, would no doubt stay in bed for a day, but the worker, who knows that a day in bed means several shillings off his wages, struggles on, probably gets a chill, and for many weeks is lying at death's door or near it, his wife having to nurse him, and at the same time to meet all the added demands that fall upon a household of sickness with the greatly diminished income of the Insurance payment, supplemented, perhaps, by a few shillings from a Friendly Society or Provident Club. When, as sometimes occurs, the husband dies, the trials of the wife are still further increased. She then becomes, if her family is a young one, both a wage-earner and spender, toiling for the living by day and attempting her domestic duties by night.

Unemployment remains the principal terror of the worker and his family. Nothing preys quite so strongly upon the mind of the man who is normally healthy, fit and willing than the weary soul-destroying task of a vain search for a job, and the continued sight of a wife and family in want of the elementary things of life which he cannot provide. "Out of work! the most fearful, the most nerve-racking, the most dreaded experience a workman knows," says one of them.[1] "This experience," continues the engineer who is writing, "is the curse of modern workshop life. Those who imagine that 'out of work' is a sort of enforced vacation have no conception of what it means. The weary soul-destroying quest from shop to shop; vitality weakened by loss of good food; the mind, a prey to constant anxiety, gradually becomes numbed, self-respect begins to fade as the awful feeling of being unwanted comes into a man's consciousness, accentuated by his inability to provide for those who look to him for dependence, and the once intelligent workman sinks down into the abyss of the unemployable." Much nonsense is talked about the number of men who willingly subsist upon State doles and grants. These various provisions for the emergency of unemployment are miserably and pitiably small compared with the human needs of the man upon whom there depend for support a wife and family, and with such grants or without them, the unemployed man is soon reduced to the verge of despair.

[1] "*Jack Screw*" in the *World's Work*, May 1921.

How, then, in these periods of exceptional stress, when sickness lays them low, when they are broken on the industrial machine, when the Angel of Death beats his wings above their doors, when the spectre of want stalks through their streets—how, in such circumstances do the workers contrive to exist? Frequently some tragic things occur. Lady Bell, Mr. Reynolds and Miss Loane.[1] describe them at greater length than is now at my disposal. It comprises mainly an epic of stoic endurance, prodigious self-command, the exercise of the most rigid economy and the exhibition of so great a sympathy and understanding on the part of the poor one to another as must make any man glow with pride in his race. Up-grown children will assist their parents with gifts and loans; more prosperous neighbours will unobtrusively feed the lads and lasses of the stricken or the out-of-works. Mothers will quietly and sadly wrap up treasured little possessions and slip with them to the pawnbroker. . . . Meanwhile, obligations are very frequently incurred; doctors' and tradesmen's bills constitute a lien on earnings for many months after the sick one or the unemployed has returned to duty; the Sunday suit has probably to be redeemed from the custody of the man at the sign of the three brass balls, and borrowed money has to be repaid. It is all a revelation of such pluck, such courage, such will to meet and wrestle with uncertainty and possible disaster; such solidarity, such evenness of temper, such a store-house of elemental qualities, which have made this country at least

[1] In *Neighbours and Friends.*

materially great, that enables us to face many otherwise disturbing factors with calmness and, indeed, with a measure of confidence.

3. "*Not By Bread Alone.*"

Even in this mosaic of peoples "man doth not live by bread alone." Material factors, such as the actual struggle for existence and the amount of mental exercise that the process involves, do, it is true, dominate the lives of the workers, and do therefore, to an extent, influence their conduct in the moments of leisure. The exact expression of this influence varies a great deal. A very few it makes into hermits—men who, as far as possible, withdraw from the world and lose themselves in the maze of some hobby, some cult, some pseudo-science; some it fashions into the prophets of simple discontent, who brood over wrongs, real or imaginary; more it converts into leaders of thought and action. Of these I shall have more to say at a later stage. What, at the moment, let me ask, does it make of the great majority? The query is soon answered: it turns them into men and women who find quick and easy relief from the border line of human endurance in shallow pleasure and diversion.

It is significant of much that in my own experience, borne out by every observer and investigator to whom I have appealed, either in their literature or in person, that to an ever-increasing degree the people are seeking amusement beyond the threshold of their own doors. For this there are many

reasons, chief of which undoubtedly is the increasing difficulty of realizing any sort of pleasure within. So far as the men are concerned, the determining factors in whether they are wont to spend the evening at home or in some other refuge are the size and condition of the home. If he is a normal man, working the normal hours in a normal industry, he wants a place which is warm, light, bright and cheerful, and where, clearly, he is not in the way. In many a three- or four-roomed house, where, especially, the wife or mother is a capable manager, the men will pass a good deal of their leisure smoking, reading, playing with the youngsters, doing household jobs such as repairing broken articles in domestic use. The atmosphere is pretty faithfully rendered in *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, and much genuinely happy recreation is found in this way. But all men whose homes provide such relative comfort are not content to pass their time in them. And there are also those thousands of poky two- or three-roomed houses, where the woman is unskilled in the domestic arts, and where the peace and order and happiness that a man seeks is practically unknown. Yet again it has to be remembered that these men, and for that matter their wives too, seek not a stimulus to the intellect, but what is really no more than *dolce far niente*. "So far as the workman is concerned," says Lady Bell, "it is a good deal to demand of the average man whose work is of a strenuous physical kind that he should be equal to a mental strain in his hours of leisure, or that he should have energy to invent or create occupations of a desirable kind for him-

self." The consequence of all these factors and influences is that most members of the working classes pass their leisure in those social centres which grow with the demand for them—sports fields, music-halls, cinemas, public-houses and clubs. Sport, however, is undoubtedly the most popular attraction. There is nothing more moving than the sight of the scores of thousands who gather to witness such a combat as that involved in the struggle for the English Cup, when the "gate" yields its £5,000 and four times that sum is spent on the journey to the scene of the match. Football is enthroned in the hearts of the working men, and just what part it plays in their lives may be gathered from the prodigious sale of evening newspapers devoted mainly to the game, or from the demeanour of the crowd in a typical provincial city like Birmingham, Leeds, Glasgow or Cardiff, when a local team has particularly distinguished itself. This devotion to football induces two criticisms. It turns the working man into a mere onlooker of the skill of others rather than encouraging him to play himself, and thus to gain both the physical exercise and the sense of true sportsmanship which are the ultimate justification of all games. In the second place it constitutes, with horse-racing, the foundation of the betting system. It is doubtful that the placing of a humble shilling now and again on a favourite football team or a "fancied" horse is either a sin or is necessarily to be condemned. It is only one expression of the love of every human being for the spirit of chance, expressed in a thousand different ways. Nor can one conscientiously say that it necessarily

impoverishes a man. Many thousands, in fact, have their humble "flutter" and are not seriously the worse for it; though frequently they lose, they also sometimes win, and the satisfaction of finding himself in possession of many extra shillings to a man who rarely has more than three or four in his pocket is not a small one. The evil of betting and gambling is that for so many men it becomes a craze, and that in pursuit of it hard-earned wages, never too large, are thrown away. And at the same time, a craze so strongly developed deadens the mind of the man to every other obligation or interest. The worker who lives only to bet is more completely the despair of all reformers than the most obstinate conservative or the most indifferent wage-slave.

Sport is practically the only outdoor pleasure of the people. During the past few years there has been a considerable development of the charabanc habit, but this mode of pleasure-seeking is an expensive one, and only the very well paid worker and his family can indulge in it. A close scrutiny of the passengers will at once reveal the fact that a great number of them are from the lower middle classes, particularly on the Sunday trips, and those made from the popular holiday resorts, small tradesmen.

More striking than anything else in the development of democratic pleasure-seeking is the immense popularity that has come to the cinema and its rivalry over the public-houses and clubs. The cinema offers almost everything that the worker wants—a meed of comfort, entertainment and an avenue of relief from the dullness of

work and home. It provides two things—excitement and a certain sense of the beautiful—which are, as a rule, far removed from his experience, but which nevertheless are sources of deep and permanent attraction. For this reason, too, the cinema is the favourite and habitual haunt of the worker's wife and children. In their individual studies of the inadequately and mal-equipped workers, the Sheffield investigators record case upon case where a great part of the leisure of these people is spent "at the pictures." The music halls and the theatres are still largely patronized, but they have not kept pace with the growing popularity of the cinema for two reasons: (1) because they do not provide the variety that can be offered by means of the film; and (2) because the cinema is so cheap (it is possible to get seats at some halls for fourpence and sixpence) that the poorest can pay three or four visits a week to these establishments, and an enormous number do so.

The public-house and the drinking club, however, have not yet lost their capacity to attract. They are the centres of the workers' hospitality and conviviality, and, man being a social animal whose instincts are towards association, they will undoubtedly remain so until a new and improved method of human intercourse is produced. There is much evidence to convince one that drunkenness as a habit is steadily declining; that the working man is using the public-house less as a place for the gratification of a large alcoholic appetite and more as a resort of rest and change and friendly debate over one or two glasses of beer.

This, too, in spite of, and not in any way as a result of, the attitude of licencees towards the comfort of their patrons. No class of reformer more completely arouses the wrath of the worker than the self-righteous well-to-do advocate of total abstinence—the man who would close up at once every public-house in the Kingdom. He is deemed to personify the traditional interference of those who regard themselves as the "betters" of the workers, sent into the world to reform them, and he is one of the best-disliked men in the country. The idea of the public-house as a refuge and as a resort of conviviality is so firmly fixed in the minds of the people that it can never be eradicated, and in insisting upon this fact Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton have seized upon at least one fact which entitles them to claim an understanding of the democratic temperament. We cannot end public-houses; therefore what we have to do is to mend them.

This consideration of the social habits of the people ends inevitably upon a note of pessimism. The fact that there should be a growing aversion to the drabness of life in the wretched homes of the dull industrial centres is perhaps a hopeful and encouraging sign; but that it should find expression in a restless search after pulsating pleasures, complete absorption in things so fleeting, so trivial, and in certain instances so definitely harmful, is saddening and disturbing, accompanied, as it is, by the almost complete dethronement of home life and all that this should stand for. King George never displayed greater sagacity than when he needfully reminded us that "the founda-

tions of Britain's greatness are laid in the homes of the people." Yet those foundations are now progressing to decay. The street, the cheap café, the amusement resort—all these influences are rapidly gaining the commanding influence. It involves a corresponding lack of parental control of children, especially those who have reached the adolescent stage, who are probably earning wages, and who are persuaded that to do what parents and older friends do is the assertion of their own manhood and womanhood. They spend the early part of their lives amid influences which are almost bound, in the main, to be unfavourable, to produce a generation too faithfully modelled upon that which has gone before, and to encourage vacuity, when what we require more than anything else is trained, alert, intelligent thought. The *Tit-Bits* mind is dominant and the *News of the World*, with its three million Sunday sale, its record of crime and misconduct, and stage and theatrical gossip, measures the extent of the serious contemplation of the great majority of the people. It is the most fitting complement of those hopeless surroundings in which we compel four-fifths of the people to live, and the most natural manifestation of an environment rarely, if ever, stirred by greater things.

4. *The Awakening.*

Can we qualify this note of pessimism? Does nothing more encouraging emerge from an intensive study of the mentality of the mass? Are we

merely to judge it by the sordidness of its every-day surroundings—by the more obvious of its enjoyments? We are not, for then our picture would be completely out of focus. It would ignore considerations of the first importance, an examination of which is calculated to yield us the profit on the preliminary survey of the material condition of the mass.

Marx had to meet many challengers of his economic interpretation of history, and his theory is only partially right. But there can be no doubt that he did at least discern something of the truth when he emphasized the influence of man's material surroundings upon his mind. It is to the growing pressure of those surroundings that much of the unrest which has been developing during the past twenty years may be ascribed. But other influences have also been operating—influences of a wider education and a more intelligent observation. The results, in so far as they have led to reflection among the mass, are to be divided into two classes. These influences have produced, on the one hand, a considerable number of men and women who ponder over their condition, who are restless and disturbed, without knowing just why, and who are not at all certain as to what they want or how they are going to attain a more satisfactory way of life. They think, but only occasionally, and in patches at some period of stress, at the urge of some calamity, by some shocking sight which throws an illuminating glare upon their own lot. These influences have produced, on the other hand, a not inconsiderable minority of working-class men whose thought is serious and consistent, who are

quite sure they know what they want, and who differ only as to the best means of attainment. The Sheffield investigators who set out to discover the capacity of the workers for the serious tasks of life, and in the process "dipped, as it were, a giant hand among the swarming thousands of the city and picked up a few hundreds of them who were representative of the whole 200,000," found that somewhere about one-quarter were well-equipped and approaching three-quarters inadequately equipped.[1] Mr. Robert Williams, the General Secretary of the National Transport Workers' Federation, who has had a wide and intimate experience of working men, thinks that "in industrial affairs the active and intelligent proletarian leavening of one man in ten is the determining factor. He organizes discussion against low wages and long hours; he is the spirited advocate who makes his influence felt in the great industries of the country, and nine out of ten follow his lead not so much because of any clearly defined and logical processes of the mind but because of an intuitive or instinctive understanding of the facts of life."[2]

Whether one thinks the Sheffield percentage too high, or the very small proportion named by Mr. Williams too low, there will, no doubt, be a general agreement as to the fact that a very large number of the workers are now awakened from an age-long

[1] Only one-sixteenth was found to be mal-equipped. For definitions at length of these findings and how they were arrived at, see chap. iii. et. seq. of *The Equipment of the Workers.*

[2] *The New Labour Outlook*, p. 49.

slumber, and that, critically or superficially, fitfully or consistently, they are thinking. Necessarily, because their interests, impulses and conditions, the factors which induce thought, are similar, the people are thinking on lines which do not greatly vary. Of what, then, is the crowd thinking? To return an answer, one must consider in somewhat greater detail those factors which have so stimulated the action of its mind, and developed its articulation.

A most vital one, because it affected every wage-earner and his dependents, was the pressure of increasing prices which progressively marked those ten full years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Great War. It was the principal cause of those incipient revolts which dislocated, from time to time, great industries, and which finally brought the national railway system and the great coal-fields to a standstill. And because the workers in those industries which were well organized won a great deal of what they sought to make good, the declining purchasing power of the sovereign, there was an immense accession of strength to the trade unions catering for those industries which hitherto had not been so well organized. This had a great effect in developing the sense of working-class solidarity. Even to the man who was otherwise an indifferent and perhaps thoroughly unsatisfactory Trade Unionist, who paid his dues and took no deeper interest in his membership save to support the demand for more wages, the mere growth of numbers and the manifest success which they could attain became impressive, and indeed convincing. How this process has been heightened

and intensified since the summer of 1914 is a matter of knowledge common to us all.

A second factor is that great expansion of education which has taken place in our own time. It has at least unlocked the mind of the crowd. Very few men and women in the twenties or the thirties who are sound in intellect can now remain totally unconscious of the main currents of life and their implications. Coincident has been the increase in opportunities, for those minded to use them, of entering the gateway to understanding—free public and works libraries, popular lectures, the broadened contents of newspapers which instruct while they interest. There is a closer connection than may appear on the surface between the prodigious sale of the cheap editions of works by famous and authoritative writers, such as those published in the Home University Library, the Nation's Library, and the People's Series, and the fact of unrest. Go into the homes of those one-in-ten men to whom Mr. Williams awards the credit of influence, and you will find large numbers possessed of their own choice little library. Bought by hard-earned and hard-saved shillings, they have been lovingly displayed by their owners—textile operatives in Yorkshire, miners in Wales and artisans in the Midlands—to the present writer. Young men in particular read more widely. I have been astonished to find the increasing number of workers who have acquired a knowledge of the economics of industry, in some cases superficial, in others very deep and searching. It is no uncommon thing these days for a Welsh miner to write to a local paper letters based on an accurate examination of a colliery

firm's balance sheet, with neatly turned comments upon bonus distributions, huge reserves, and so forth.

So that the democratic as well as the aristocratic intellect of the mass has developed a quickened ability to see, and to judge, more or less accurately, from what it sees. And, granting that this was the position in which the mass stood when the war came upon us, it is opportune to ask what that profound disturbance further wrought upon the minds of the people. It certainly confirmed and strengthened and expanded their growing consciousness of power. For it was always to the mass that the appeals of the nation's leaders were made—appeals to enlist, to produce more munitions, more coal, more ships, to remain calm and confident in the unsettlement and stress of a great anxiety. You cannot so impress men with a sense of their power and responsibility and expect that they shall remain contented in bonds of servitude. Nor can you mobilize five million men whose capacity to think has been awakened, take them from their habitual surroundings, show them the world, what it is, what it has to offer, and its amazing promise, and expect those men afterwards to return unmoved and still contented, to the mechanical toil of a modern factory and life in a mean and smelly street. Nor, indeed, did they do so, for the mind of the crowd is more alert, more impatient, and more insurgent, than ever it has been before. Again, however, it is desirable to differentiate between those two sections of the crowd—the mass of ill-equipped and the smaller group of well-equipped men and women. For the

former, whether they went abroad or witnessed the great upheaval from the comparative safety of their own town, had their minds quickened, whilst their moral, intellectual and æsthetic qualities have either remained stationary or suffered a definite decline.

They are consumed with a sense of bitterness, of foiled rights, of anger at their efforts which seem to have availed them so little, and, being unmindful of obligation—sometimes repudiating it—they are disposed to be purely self-centred, almost as reckless in their actions as their judgments.[1] But completely reverse has been the influence upon those who had already developed a sense of good citizenship. They are more intellectually disturbed, more introspective, more critical of the social mirage in which they are condemned to live, more emphatic in their revolt against their status of industrial helotry. And, to the extent that they are enabled to lead the crowd, to that extent will the crowd stand, in future, for great and sweeping changes in our chaotic civilization.

Such, then, is the metamorphosis worked by the war and its effect on the pliant lives of the people. In this intensification of thought, what, one may ask, does the crowd think of itself? It certainly has the most definite views upon its own place in the organized scheme of things. It is more clannish, more jealous of external influence, more determined in reliance upon its own power, than it has even been before. It is full of self-pity—pity

[1] Some of the civil and military disturbances which have arisen in various parts of the country since 1918 illustrate this lamentable lack of self-discipline.

at its own struggle, and the little that comes of that struggle; at its ignorance, lacking the consciousness that there is a way, if there is a will, to remove it; at its inability to meet and cope with the facts of life. Yet it has a growing conviction that it is best left alone to meet its own difficulties, to fashion its own ends. It is increasingly suspicious of the well-meaning meddlers who would "organize" it on the basis of a meticulous efficiency. It thinks that such activities are stimulated by something more than compassion—for example, that the reformers seek to make it a more competent machine for the production of wealth which it will not have the opportunity to enjoy. This, rather than any abstract respect for liberty *per se*, is the explanation of much of that indignation at the increasing activities of inspectors, voluntary workers, police officials, and the like, which is graphically described by Mr. Reynolds. "What's the use o' talking to they question-asking hellers?" asks one man. "They ask 'ee questions wi'out end, an' so long as you wags your tail an' tells 'em what they wants to hear, they goes on wasting their time an' yours too. But so soon as you begins to tell 'em the truth, what you thinks and they don't like it, then 'Good day' they says, an' walks away. If you want help, help yourself, always was and always will be; and that sort o' help don't make 'ee feel dubious 'bout it neither." [1]

This view of itself colours the attitude of the mass to the classes "above it." Nothing is more interesting, nor significant of the changing times,

[1] "*Seems So!*"

than the feeling of contempt that it increasingly shows towards the suburbans. This is induced by the fact that whereas during the past ten years the mass has been rapidly asserting itself, demanding the anxious attention of statesmen and others to its unrest, and rapidly consolidating its strength, the middle classes have been suffering a definite eclipse. The worker despises the apparent helplessness of the middle classes, at least to preserve themselves, and extracts much good humour from the docility they display towards the rich. Their pretensions provide him with much amusement. Sometimes, if he is one of the inadequately equipped, he will envy them, what he imagines is their greater comfort, their surer existence. The barrier that rises up between the mass and the suburb is an effective one. I have known, within my own intimate experience, the life of a factory worker or a miner become almost intolerable among his old friends, and even among his relatives, when he has received promotion to some official job in the works or the pit. This is especially so in colliery districts, because when men receive certain preferments they become directly responsible to the manager or owner, and can no longer remain members of the Miners' Federation. The black coat and the white collar is frequently looked upon as the hall-mark of snobbery, and much fun is provoked by some at the desperate straits of these people decently to preserve their outward appearance. This, however, is more the attitude of the less thoughtful worker and his wife than the view of the more intelligent citizen. Yet the reception of the suburbans into the ranks of political labour,

which is largely organized by the effective working man, is usually a cold one. There is a faint suspicion that the "convert" is more concerned about the interests of his own class than about the complete emancipation of democracy. In some cases quite a sharp line marks the efforts of these two forces within the Labour movement. For example, the 1917 Club, which is largely a Labour and Socialist institution, with headquarters in the West End, and which has a great many deeply earnest members from the upper and middle classes, has not, to my knowledge, a single genuine working man or woman on its roll. A working man or a working woman would feel out of element there, and would be far more at home in an ordinary trade union meeting hall.

In its view of the rich, the mass is curiously detached and rather less critical. It has no real hatred of its masters—certainly not of their personality—and the preachers and affirmers of a class war do not in any sense reflect the real mind of the worker. One extraordinary thing is that the rich man and the rich woman is received with a greater show of camaraderie into the Labour and Socialist ranks than the middle-class "converts," mainly for the reason that it is supposed that they are less likely to be motived by self-interest, and there is singularly little support for the general newspaper suggestion that such people are endeavouring to use the mass as a convenient stepping-stone to a public career. One more fact which may be surprising is that the mass, where it does hate, shows much more hatred of the *nouveau riche* than of the older possessors of wealth

and prestige. This is only slightly tempered by the fact that it has usually more respect for the man who has made his wealth than for the man who has merely inherited it. "You have the rivets,[1] or your father had," says Mr. Reynolds' "Dave Perring" to a rather supercilious young gentleman from a public school who engaged him in conversation on the shore. "You did nuthin' to get it." The difference in attitude is largely explained by the varying conduct of the two classes—the aristocracy and the plutocracy—to the poor. The approach of the former is becoming somewhat less overbearing than it used to be; where an estate fringes on an expanding industrial district, the occupants can no longer act in an officious and overbearing manner towards the men and women of the locality, even if they desired to do so, and in many cases such conduct has never been by any means general to the aristocracy, for men and women in such districts who are now class conscious have recollections of much kindly aid and succour in the days when patronage and charity were the fashion.

But dislike of the *nouveau riche* is very widespread and definite. It springs largely from the fact that the mass—the whole of it—has the sense to see that this wealth has been made largely in a great emergency, an emergency in which the very existence of England was challenged. The mass sees that comparatively poor men, such as shipping clerks, small machine-makers, engineers, and the like, *who stayed at home,* rapidly became very quickly and very easily, not of their own

[1] Money.

wit or ability so much as through mere circumstance, very rich. And it hates their vulgar, blatant display of this wealth, their deliberate ostentation, their gifts to charity, and the speedy reward in the shape of a title. A wonderful limousine passes a man on his way from a hard day's work, narrowly avoids knocking him down, and he turns to the disappearing vehicle and its occupants with an emphatic "damn!" That ejaculation is not merely a condemnation of an individual; it is a heartfelt judgment on a system; it is a social phenomenon of the first importance. An experienced social worker among the people, a representative herself of our ancient aristocracy, recently told the present writer that the Rolls-Royce was responsible for more discontent in the East End than any wage-scale in existence there.

But the main indictment of wealth is that it serves substantially to press down the mass in its mould, and to prevent it from more complete functioning. The mass sees quite well that it bolsters up, on the one hand, privilege, and on the other servility. Tips at a station, in a restaurant, secure prompt and efficient service. Smart dress in a shop guarantees obsequious smiles, compliments, and infinite pains to please. Both these qualities are in the most direct conflict with the rising tide of democratic sentiment, and will surely attract an intensified challenge to that social inequality which provokes them.

5. *A Challenge to the Old Order.*

There will probably be no quarrel with the conclusion that the newer consciousness of itself is the most important fact in the awakening of the mass. Power is a vain thing without a knowledge of its existence, or, for that matter, without the knowledge how to use it. To-day we are faced with an enormous body of men and women who have made these immense discoveries. This power is two-edged: it is political; it is industrial. But it is not always put to use, and when it is, who will say that it is invariably well employed? One has only to examine the evidences, and acknowledgement of the realization of power, as well as of its indifferent use, must automatically follow. The trend of industry, especially since the Armistice, plainly indicates a deepening of the ferment among the mass. It is in rebellion against almost everything that makes up its life—against its poverty (a good part not only against its material but its intellectual poverty); against all those tangible things which for so many make home and leisure a nightmare and a curse; and against the entire character of industrial relations. This latter stimulus to unrest is playing a very large part in the profound unsettlement of our time. Men and women of the mass who undertake much of the thought and action of the rest, are beginning seriously to challenge the entire method by which the work of the world is carried on. They would not express the matter quite in those terms. They would probably say that they

object to earning their bread and butter for eight hours a day, six days a week, under conditions in which they themselves have no control. They would say, too, that politics have been democratized, why not industry? And they would say, particularly at the time in which I write, with a trade depression of unexampled magnitude bearing them down, that there is something very radically wrong with a system which permits wholesale unemployment while the world is crying aloud for goods. Unemployment, with its concomitant of real hardships, is more greatly resented by men to the extent that they have acquired knowledge, æsthetic taste, and the wholesome desire for the better things of life. Thirty or forty years ago, and even less, it was no deprivation for a man who probably did not know such pleasures to be unable to go to the theatre, or spend Saturday in the country, or once a year to go for a few days to the sea. To the steady-going man of the post-war age, out of a job for perhaps two or three months, such sacrifices weigh hardly—quite as hardly as the need for pinching and scraping to exist on his out-of-work pay, supplemented, perhaps, by a few pounds put aside in the co-operative store or savings bank. Of this state of mind, the strike for varied ends, the increase in trade union membership, and the consolidation of forces, and the advance in voluntray reforming agencies such as co-operation, are all authentic evidences.

They are, however, all expressions within the industrial field. More spectacular, and perhaps more significant, has been the display in the political arena. In four short years the Labour Party

has emerged successfully in a long and painful struggle towards a national status. The people have now got their own vehicle of political expression. The Labour Party, both in the Parliamentary and the municipal spheres, is soundly organized. It meets the other parties on ground which is almost equal. What, in that time, has been the result? The Khaki Election of 1918 descended suddenly upon the leaders before the machine had been perfected, but over 300 Labour candidates took the field, and the fact that only 64 were returned is completely unrepresentative of the strength of the Labour poll, which totalled more than a quarter of the votes cast, so that with any logical scheme of representation there would have been nearly 200 Labour members in the House. More notable has been the success in local politics. A large number of Urban and Rural District Councils are effectively controlled by Labour majorities. So, too, are the County Councils of Durham and Monmouthshire. So almost is Glamorgan; and London, which ten years ago was regarded as hopeless from the point of view of Labour politics, has now Labour boroughs and Labour mayors.

Where and what are the seats of this silent revolation? An inquiry will repay examination, and will provide some food for reflection. They are mainly in those areas of densest population, where environment is worst, though not necessarily where wages are lowest. Only one or two Labour M.P.'s sit for non-industrial constituencies; the truly astonishing thing is that Mr. W. S. Royce, a large landowner and an ex-Tory, and Mr. George Edwards, one of the pioneer organizers of agri-

cultural labourers, have both been sent to Westminster by rural constituencies. Otherwise Labour representation is chiefly confined to mining constituencies, and to centres like Widnes, Manchester, Glasgow, the Rhondda Valley, the Spen Valley, the Staffordshire Potteries, and so on. The colliers, too, are behind the democratic power in Durham and in Monmouthshire, and those London boroughs which have so thoroughly startled us by their iconoclasm are, taking Greenwich and Fulham as examples, though clearly working-class districts, by no means the worst to be found in London. This would appear to be effective support for the argument that it is not the greatest sufferers from our defective civilization—the underworld—who are the mainstay of Labour politics, but the better-paid artisans; and it explains, too, the parallel paradox that with a decline in industrial prosperity there should come an eclipse in Labour's star. Spen Valley was won when we were at the flood-tide of a boom; Woolwich was lost when a million men idly walked the streets.

The aims of the mass—industrial and political—who would willingly essay their description? They are expressed in so many ways, there are so many apparent contradictions in the avowed purposes for which the people organize themselves that one can but outline them, leaving conclusions very much to the individual judgment. But they at least have this in common—that they are mainly directed towards the abolition of those material disabilities from which Labour suffers to-day.

By what process do they seek these things—the larger life, the pleasanter life, emancipation from

the mean street, greater control of their working hours, the levelling of social relations? One of the best indexes I think is the type of man, his temper, outlook and character, which stands at the helm, guiding the organizations which declare that they speak for Labour, and the fact that the effective worker has elevated one of the type of Mr. Arthur Henderson, essentially reformist, evangelical, competent, and thoroughly to be trusted, that it permits him, as he undoubtedly does, to sway the Labour Party, to formulate its policy, and to use his power and prestige in their name, is conclusive evidence that they are fairly shrewd in their judgments. Mr. Henderson is unquestionably working, and the Labour Party, too, is working, for a great deal that the mass approves and desires. "We propose," says Mr. Henderson,[1] "a series of national minima to protect the people's standard of life. For the workers of all grades and both sexes we demand, and mean to secure, proper legislative provision against unemployment, accident, and industrial disease, a reasonable amount of leisure, a minimum rate of wages . . . an increasing share in the management and control of the factories and workshops. . . . We believe that the path to the democratic control of industry lies in the common ownership of the means of production." This, briefly stated, is Socialism, or a preliminary form of it, and involves the utmost use of the State machine in its realization. It is the policy which for nearly thirty years the Independent Labour Party, with Mr. Philip Snowden and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald as

[1] *The Aims of Labour*, p. 32, and appendices.

the outstanding leaders and inspirers, have been engaged in popularizing. Pure Socialism, and an essentially democratic internationalism, it is true, have been the main ideals of the I.L.P., rather than the demand for alleviation of existing social conditions, and, judged by the membership of less than 50,000, the party can hardly claim to speak for the mass. But the I.L.P. is mainly a propagandist organization, and if one is to judge by the great meetings it holds and the measure of support its speakers there obtain, one is bound to accept the conclusions, not only that its influence is out of all proportion to the names on its registers, but also that after the cloud under which the party and its leaders fell during the war, it is surely gaining the ear of the people. These facts indicate how far we have travelled since the days when Mr. Will Crooks, with his emotional appeal, but almost barren of a constructive programme, Mr. Bowerman, Mr. Appleton, Sir David Shackleton, Mr. Brace and Mr. John Hodge, mild reformers who never too deeply disturbed the still waters of acquiescence or sought to change the established order of capitalist organization, were the authentic and accepted spokesmen of the mass. Mr. Clynes, sober, serious, and very deeply in earnest, Mr. J. H. Thomas more facile, more restless, more readily bending to exigencies and opportunities—in one case the elected but in both cases the acknowledged leader of immense organizations of workers, accept, to a greater or lesser degree, the blend of a palliative and constructive policy which the Labour Party proclaims. But they are mainly engaged in the administration of the trade unions;

they are, too, older men, who are confidently followed largely upon past achievements. One sees more clearly the contemporary spirit of Labour organized for political ends, accepting the policy of the Labour Party in the recent return to Parliament of such modern-minded, clever, and fearless men as Mr. William Graham and Mr. Neil Maclean, speaking the Scottish accent, but also its proletarian mind; Mr. Myers, the vanquisher of Sir John Simon, and Mr. Jack Mills, the "live wire" of the engineers.

Or, again, one finds an exhibition of real wisdom in the choice which the mass has made in the selection of men and women to officer the great co-operative movement—the most striking and hopeful of all the creations of the workers. These leaders—quiet, painstaking, able, though in many cases self-educated, are engaged in laying the foundations—and laying them soundly—of a co-operative commonwealth. They are triumphing over the material facts, they are building probably even better than a good many of those who elevated them can yet wholly appreciate.

But this does not dispose of the articulate section of the mass. Challenging the State Socialism of the Independent Labour Party and the National Labour Party, and repudiating altogether such a compromising institution as the Trade Union Congress, are many small minorities. They differ and dispute to some extent among themselves, but they may conveniently be divided roughly into two sections, the Syndicalist Guildsmen and the Communists. They unite, however, in this, that they say that industrial democracy can come

only through industrial action. The mass, add the Communists, is sick of political action. In the election of 1918 they were greatly be-fooled, and their discovery of it has cured them of any political ambition. It is not altogether without cause that they say this, for it is curiously true that whilst the mass is sending more and abler men to represent it in Parliament, it is rapidly replacing local officials of trade unions by men who are notoriously anti-political, or at best non-political. When, on the Clyde, in the Midland engineering trades, or in South Wales, a leader of the old school dies or resigns, a thoroughgoing industrialist takes his place. He is probably an ex-student of the Central Labour College, the Marxian institution in London, which, though owned and sustained by the funds of the National Union of Railwaymen and the South Wales Miners' Federation, is deliberately working to negative the political purpose of the two organizations as declared by their impregnable position within the Labour Party. There is, however, an explanation of this curious situation which completely destroys the claims of the direct actionists. These young men are in general appointed as trade union secretaries and organizers, not so much because they stand, as so many of them do, for the violent overthrow of the Capitalist organization, but because as a rule they are well educated and well trained and fully equipped to bargain and to negotiate with the employers in matters of vital importance so intimately affecting the bread-and-butter questions of hours and wages.

The National Guilds League does not stand for violence. It proposes an orderly transition from

the present system to one which would give complete ownership of industry to the State and complete control to the trade unions, and it would leave a reformed Parliament to function purely politically. It has had for several years the advantage of the brilliant propaganda of Mr. G. D. H. Cole, a former Fellow of Magdalen, who has worked with unremitting zeal and enthusiasm to popularize its policy. And yet, despite the fact that, in proposing self-government in industry, it proposes something which large numbers of the intelligent workers want, and despite, too, the fact that, by the work of the Building Guilds, some of it so splendidly successful, demonstrations have been given of its theory in practice, I doubt if one in every hundred of the population could to-day explain what Guild Socialism is. Mr. Cole and his friends are engaged largely in beating the air, and they are so engaged because they are attempting to impose something upon the mass, whereas the mass in general will support only something springing from itself. If Mr. Cole can win the support of that effective minority of which Mr. Williams speaks, we may at some future time get an application of Guild principles to modify and to soften the edges of bureaucratic State Socialism, but that prospect is a distant one.

The Communist campaign is more interesting and more portentous. It is more spectacular; it appeals more to instinct and less to reason; it promises early results, though clearly those results would be far removed from their promise; and it has captured the imagination of a very few men in the workshops with the capacity for agitation.

They have as their leaders one or two men like Mr. Tom Mann, outstanding figures in the world of industrial organization, but more of the type of Mr. Arthur McManus, Chairman of the Communist Party, and Mr. Francis Meynell, whose names are completely devoid of significance to the mass. They and the few young persons who, with a superior mien and an Oxford accent, hang on to the skirts of Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, and give Lenin and Trotsky an entirely false hope of a British revolution, collect crowds in large halls and harangue them and elicit cheers here and there; but it is simply the release of surplus steam which the workers have generated during a harassing day in the mine or the factory. Mr. George Lansbury, who boasts of his 300,000 sale of the *Daily Herald*, has quite wrongly treated indignation at the British Government's treatment of Russia as sympathy with Bolshevism. He, as editor, ought to know what nearly everybody else knows, that 75 per cent. of the people who buy his paper do so because it is sugaring its revolutionary propaganda with a fat coating of sport.

The revolution in England tarries, and if one may judge from contact with the mass, by attending its meetings and demonstrations, and by reading its literature, showing acute discontent but hardly any support for a violent upheaval, it will continue to tarry. The Communists in the summer of 1921, witnessed a definite eclipse of their hopes, first by the notable concessions to Capitalism which Lenin in Russia has been compelled to make, and secondly by the failure of the Triple Alliance to function at what the British Bolshevists

had clearly decreed as the appointed time.[1] The Communists are in a tiny and hopeless minority, and they are badly officered. The very questionable "past" of some of the party's local leaders condemns it in the eyes of those who know them. But Communism fails and will continue to fail here because it is quite alien to the spirit of the people, their stability, their level-headed qualities, their capacity for long-suffering, for more or less patient waiting on events, the substantial stake in the country of those with a few score pounds in the co-operative store, in War Savings Certificates, in the deeds of their own houses, and so forth. The Communists may slightly increase their numbers, but they will never secure practical realization of their plans so long as we go on mending our existing institutions, modifying them, and adapting them to changing conditions, and, where necessary, replacing them by new ones, conceived in keeping with the new spirit of the times.

As a foil to these definite and purposeful organizations we have the phenomena of Mr. Horatio Bottomley and the weekly organ *John Bull.* We may not care very much for Mr. Bottomley, we may hate his pretensions, his shams, the false and often dolting lead that he gives, but we cannot ignore him. There is such a thing as the *John Bull* mind. Who owns it? For the greater part those inadequately equipped ex-service men who returned from Army life disturbed, unsettled, aggressive, but with little capacity for probing into facts and reasoning them out. They are organized mainly as ex-service men rather than as citizens. They are of themselves

[1] The National Coal Stoppage.

a community within a community, and though they are now subject to gradual disillusion, they have stood for that alien military system which was erected in England by the war, for the argument of power and for the punitive peace. They are the men who, trade unionists though they be, do not vote Labour; and when Mr. Bottomley, solemnly raising himself from the Green Benches, claims to speak for them, he is making a claim which is by no means devoid of substance. They have sent him and his nominees to Parliament; they devour his screed; they write to him of their grievances. He exposes many harsh and unconscionable acts in the administration of the services; he stands for "a fair day's pay for a fair day's work," and the people, unable to grasp his grotesque programme of government in home and foreign affairs, re-echo his practicable policy without bothering their heads about his more ambitious remedies in matters of high policy.

Of such a democracy, so encompassed by the things that it abhors, possessed of a new and quickened temper, the majority of them yet unable to take up and to use with fruitful advantage the possibilities now ready to their hands, and the minority beating with an eager aspiration, no man can definitely foretell the future. That our present order is not necessarily static, however, requires no insistence. The future of the mass will be dependent upon a good many influences external to itself. Before discussing that future, therefore, it will be well to examine some of those influences at work in the classes which are its contemporaries.

CHAPTER II

REVOLT IN THE SUBURBS

1. *The Eclipse of the Black Coat.*

NOTHING manifests more clearly the fact that there is a new condition of England than the changes wrought during recent years in the suburbs. From the mass to the middle classes—those of the lower and the higher degrees—is a simple and natural step in the process of discussing the many changes in our national life which are now occurring, for the suburbans, too, are in revolt. It is but one more evidence of the social upheaval of the age. To-day the rebellion of the suburbans, like that in other classes, has become definitely articulate, and their respective cries indicate that this universal discontent has a common *raison d'être.* It is a material revolt—anything less substantial has almost ceased to concern the men and women of the twentieth century—and it is undoubtedly the outcome of those economic changes during the past ten years or more to which attention has already been directed. The revolt of the rich, we learn, is against taxation, which limits their luxuries, and which, we are asked to believe, is ushering in an era of ruin and decay. In direct contrast to this cry is the rebellion of the mass, the nature and

intensity of which, its increasing strength and power, and its growing significance as a trained fighting force, we have already examined.

Until recently these revolts of the rich on the one hand and the poor on the other hand entirely monopolized attention, obscuring, because it was almost inarticulate, the suburban discontent, of at least equal if not greater importance. But those days are gone. Suffering acutely, and stung to activity by the knowledge that the rich and the poor have succeeded in gaining the attention of statesmen to their wrongs, real or imaginary, the men and women of the professions have now also leapt into the arena to proclaim their wrongs, to voice their wants. But the motives vary fundamentally, for, whereas the other classes are contending to secure one thing or another that will simply add to the sum total of their happiness, the suburbans are engaged in a desperate struggle for their very existence.

The old conception of the suburban life was one in which the middle classes were supposed to occupy a position of dignified comfort, entirely remote from the worries and perplexities attendant upon a life of rigid economy and stern self-denial. Twenty-five years ago that conception may have fairly represented the truth of the situation. To-day it has ceased to have any relation to the facts, and it is this revolutionary change in their standard of existence that the middle classes have arisen furiously to challenge. The mere fact that the challenge has gone forth is substantial evidence in support of the professional man's argument that there are grounds upon which he can legitimately complain.

For, unlike the rich, by whose petulance we have many years been worried, and yet unlike the poor, who are always more or less in a state of discontent, the suburban has never been heard unless he has reached a state of affairs which convinces him that he is bearing burdens and suffering grievances so great that he can no longer silently tolerate his lot.

The revolt is a development of tendencies which, it will be recalled, were becoming increasingly apparent before the war came upon us. Its genesis was to be found in the upward movement of prices, accentuated largely by the wage demands of the workers, which, when granted, were passed on wherever possible to the consumer in the shape of increased prices. These increased prices the suburbans had to meet on incomes which were practically stationary. Their reward was a fixed sum, if they were workers, in the shape of a very modest salary; if they were aged and retired, in the shape of rents, interest, dividends, pensions or annuities. In neither case was there very much prospect of increasing income. Those who worked were mainly unorganized; they could not, like the manual classes, negotiate with their employers and threaten to strike for more remuneration. Many of them were afraid of, and nearly all of them were "above," such a course. Those who lived on the return on investments were still more powerless. It was, even in those days, a tragic and rather perplexing situation, and even before the great avalanche, every week appeared to bring forth something which, far from solving, rather deepened the problem. How, since 1914, all these tendencies have increased and intensified is a matter of know-

ledge common to us all. Prices have soared. Incomes have risen little, if at all—in some cases they have actually declined; and the suffering which has followed can be measured by the demonstrations of its severity.

These demonstrations are everywhere, but especially in the changed mode of life which these people effect. All sorts of economies are being furtively practised in an existence which for years has been one long partnership with financial stringency. One sees in the home and the office and the social circle little pleasures and indulgences gradually disappearing. A maid goes; a daughter takes up business or profession; a son, who normally would have gone to school until he was seventeen, leaves two years earlier; the grocer's and the butcher's baskets are lighter than they used to be; the city man who formerly went out to lunch now takes with him a few humble sandwiches; and the sequel to increased rates and taxes is, in many cases, the letting of part of a house or the reception of a paying guest.

All these evidences have found definite expression in protracted unrest in several professions, notably teaching and banking; what is really remarkable is the bombardment of the Press by means of letters—pitiful and indignant documents, some setting forth facts wrung from the usually anonymous writers only by the anger of bitter experience—and in a keener suburban interest in politics than has ever been displayed before.

But who are the suburbans? They are, generally speaking, that considerable number of men and women who, in the professions, in industry and in

our great services, direct and administer the nation's work. In the "upper" scales are the doctors, lawyers, advanced civil servants, younger sons and daughters of the impecunious aristocracy, retired business and commercial men; in the "lower" scales one finds the clerk, journalist, parson, dissenting minister, teacher, small tradesman, factory foreman, the minor civil servant, and so on. Their number as heads of households has been estimated at a little over two and a quarter millions, and calculating each one as representing the average five, we thus get a total population of about of 12,250,000, probably more, probably less.

Consider where these people live. They are to be found upon the outskirts of every great centre of population, by the industrial and commercial enterprise of which they exist, and it is by the service they give in return that our social system persists. Thus they are to be found in large numbers around the provincial towns and cities. Manchester has its Chorlton-cum-Hardy, its Levenshulme, its Withington; Birmingham has its Selly Oak, its Harborne, its Handsworth, its Erdington; Leeds its Chapeltown, its Headingley, and farther afield its Scarcroft and Crossgates; Liverpool its Everton, its Wavertree, its Wallasey and its Blundellsands. But London produces the most genuine, authentic and representative suburban. You will find him in Clapham, in Tooting and Balham, in Streatham, in Dulwich, in Shepherd's Bush, Honor Oak, Leyton and Ealing, and a score of other centres which the middle classes have made their own. Here they occupy, and occasionally own, the class of habitation which, from one end of the country to another, differs in

hardly any particular. There are in some cases nice detached houses in bijou grounds, or semi-detached villas, making a brave effort at smartness and distinction. They are mainly the home of the small solicitor or doctor with a modest practice, the company official, and the high-school head-master. Less attractive, but no less ambitious, are the considerable terraces of small boxlike dwellings with front gardens, brass knockers and white curtains, sheltering the clerk, the school teacher and the journalist. These abodes, bearing high-sounding names like " Rock House," " Hughen-den," " Falworth Lodge," or " Bryngwyn " (Welsh words are frequently ludicrously misapplied), pro-claim the heart and mind of the occupants, their firmly-rooted belief in their own exaltations, their superiority, and for the most part in their respecta-bility. All of them, however, represent something of the determination of the suburban to maintain himself and his family in surroundings of decency, and to secure with his slender income the utmost comfort and amenity in his home life. The retention and maintenance of these homes involves a sacrifice, and frequently a toilsome effort to supplement the weekly salary, upon which no intimate observer could look unmoved. The foundations of suburban life with its varied qualities, some open to criticism, as we shall see, some which demand our admiration and regard, are rooted in these solid comfortable houses so eloquent of professional England.

Theirs is a life of undisturbed routine, sedentary occupation, fair leisure, and demands that are rarely more than modest. Where they work, seven or eight hours of the day are employed in their specialized

tasks in the city, keeping books, auditing accounts, checking bank finances, typing letters, superintending staffs, collecting or commenting on the day's news, teaching the children, advising or pleading for litigants, managing one's little shop in a populous thoroughfare. With the regularity of the clock (or should one say the wristlet watch?) these men and women go up to the great national hives by, perhaps, the 8.35, and return as punctually by the 5.40. This methodically they do five days a week, forty-nine weeks of the year, finding in it, if one may judge from their demeanour, nothing irksome, nothing stifling, but just contented duty. They are rarely outstanding characters; their contribution to the world of a genius is unusual; they are just a plodding, conscientious, industrious, unimaginative body of workers with well-disciplined brains, which occasionally break away from routine and develop a really enterprising spirit.

They marry, and are given in marriage, strictly within their own circle. "How are the mighty fallen!" is the cry when a man takes unto himself a wife from the ranks of the toilers, as I have occasionally seen one do. So that the tradition of the middle-class woman is as definite as that of the middle-class man; frequently evidences of it are with them more strongly developed.

What is the normal existence of the average suburban family, passed in the respectability of these six or seven-roomed villas? There are rarely more than three or four children, and the number grows ominously less. Almost from the cradle to maturity the parents are concerned to give them the best start in life that circumstances will permit.

They go to the preparatory school; then to a grammar school or a secondary school, all, usually, upon the slender resources provided by the earnings of the head of the household. Occasionally, and then, if they are of the lower middle-class family, by dint of the most extreme privation on the part of those remaining at home, an especially bright boy or girl who has won an exhibition will go to the University. But in any case the children, as they are growing up, are doubtless undergoing training of some nature or other preparatory to taking their place amongst the world's workers. Seldom does the son or daughter contribute to the family income before he or she is seventeen or eighteen. In some instances the youth will receive remuneration sufficient to provide clothing and pocket-money; hardly ever will it be more than he requires for his own needs. More frequently than otherwise the child of the suburban has been a drain upon the father's salary and not a contributor to the household exchequer. Soon after a son or daughter attains to a state of complete economic independence, severance from the family circle almost certainly follows. He or she either leaves for a different sphere of labour or gets married.

The burden of running the home under such conditions usually falls jointly upon the husband and the wife. Whereas the manual worker of the good, industrious type hands out all his savings to his wife, and indeed is expected by her to do so, the middle-class man gives to his domestic partner a certain sum to be applied purely to housekeeping, and she would not have it otherwise. The husband then has to be responsible, from the money he

retains, for rent and rates, taxes, light and heating, education, his own clothing and holidays. The plan is an excellent one, for it distributes responsibility, and it compels the middle-class man to interest himself in many practical applications of citizenship, about which he usually knows so much more than the manual worker.

But as custodian of the purely domestic expenditure the suburban woman is no whit behind the wife of the worker. Nor should she be, for she has had greater educational opportunities, she has a house far better equipped than those in the industrial congestions, and she has less dirt to contend with. But her culinary, dressing and furnishing accomplishments are of themselves, in their own way, as great as the miraculous feeding of the multitude. Nowadays entertaining has almost gone by the board, but who does not recall some tempting little dinner or supper in a tiny back dining-room, and a pleasant evening in an equally tiny garden or tasteful drawing-room, provided by a hostess who, even in these post-war days, cannot have at her disposal more than two or three pounds a week?

2. *Transformation.*

The intensity of the economic struggle and the scheming with the vital problems upon which the entire standard of life depends has reacted inevitably upon the many-sided interests of the suburbans. But they have always been simple enough. The man has his bit of garden, his club, photography, golf (if the subscription is not too prohibitive),

perhaps a motor-cycle and side-car; as a special indulgence, dinner with his wife in a quiet restaurant in town and a subsequent visit to the theatre, and two or three weeks' holiday in the summer at some nice and not too boisterous resort by the sea. The women are mainly immersed in devising ways and means of increasing the comfort of their homes, in shopping expeditions, visiting friends, tennis parties, and so on. The disposal of their leisure sets the hall-mark upon the character of the suburbans. They are interested, but not noisy, in what they do; some of the younger spirits may aspire to be daring, but they are rarely more than mildly amusing.

The old charge which an observer had to bring against the middle classes, particularly those who had won through the earlier struggles with adversity and who had attained to some sort of standard of secure comfort, was their rather foolish pretension, setting for themselves a standard or a way of life divorced from worthier things and concerned only with the fulfilment of their desire to soar. This was largely so of the successful doctor, the lawyer, the architect, the manager or owner of some industrial concern, the bank manager, the civil servant, and their families. It was an elaborate and unceasing effort to cast off the atmosphere of the suburbs, and to scale those heights upon which dwelt the owners of great wealth, the possessors of social prestige—in a word, Society. Ideals, the impulse towards social obligation and service, or support for institutions of culture and learning found no place in this existence. In the progress of this conceit the suburbans struggled to cover up the record of their earlier lives, to cast off the habit and mind

of Herne Hill, and to cultivate the ways of Mayfair, and always to link up their own interests with those of the dwellers in Park Lane and Knightsbridge. They joined the Conservative and Unionist Association and the Primrose League, not in the main because of any faith in the political philosophy of successive leaders like Lord Salisbury, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Bonar Law, but because they took it that Conservatism was synonymous with Society. In the same fashion they were mainly Church-people. Attendance at some imposing edifice with tower or spire, "high" or "low" according to taste or local sentiment, was never perhaps altogether a matter of mechanical routine, endured painfully, as a step towards distinction, but it was in almost every case more a conscious satisfaction in the correctitude of attending eleven o'clock service in morning-coat and pretty toilette than of a tenacious faith in the gospel and creed of the Established Church. Radicalism and the Free Churches were eschewed. They were left mainly to the patronage of those minor suburbans from whom, it must be added, with the working classes, those democratic institutions drew most of their support. And so in many other matters this impulse it was that formed their fashions and their manners —late dinner and dressing for it, devotion to the more exclusive forms of sport, like racquets, Badminton and polo, diligent reading of the "correct" magazines like the *Tatler* and the *Bystander*; the cultivation by the boys of an Oxford accent, and by the girls of the languor of Belgravia.

This slavish devotion to the supposed customs and habits of the idle rich had many extremely

undesirable results. Not only did it distract attention, as I have already pointed out, from obligation or devotion to the more serious and fundamental issues of life; it led to the habit of spending beyond one's means—inevitable when a family with £700 or £800 a year tries to live as if the income were so many thousands, and it created among a large number of those among the "lower" ranks of the suburbans a passion for emulation which was wholly deplorable.

The truth is that these people, somewhat suddenly risen in many cases from obscurity, formed a completely mistaken notion of our aristocracy. They were uninformed, and were unable to judge between the true and the false. Thus they confused the plutocracy, its habits and customs, with the true nobility, imagining that the display of great wealth and photographs, and news of one's doings in the smart journals, necessarily identified one with Society.

Though Tooting may not quite have equalled Dulwich in this effort to emulate Society, both sections of the middle classes which these suburbs so faithfully represent united completely in their fear and dislike of the workers. They saw, in the days before the war and whilst the conflict was raging, that the lower classes were going to good schools, often better schools than their own "private" academies; that the poor were constantly demanding and obtaining wage increases, whilst they of the suburbs had to wrestle with the rising prices and stationary salaries; and they saw that all sorts of provisions to raise the standard of comfort of labour were being made. "Who," asked one of these

suburbans, with conscious irony,[1] "has conferred these benefits on the lower classes and elevated them to a position above our own, thus reversing the ordinances of Nature and contradicting the very meaning of words? Alas! It is we ourselves who have done it. Have we not learnt it every time that the demand for rates came in? It is we who have educated our masters. We who have supplied their houses below cost price. We who have provided them with public baths and wash-houses, with playing-fields, with infirmaries and jolly workhouses, fitted with electric light and porcelain baths to comfort their old age. Remaining respectable, we are no longer respected."

This same spirit drew the most formidable mental pictures of some of the more famous Labour leaders: Mr. Smillie as a great uncouth ignorant demagogue, whereas he is the very reverse of all those things; Mr. MacDonald as a loud-mouthed, red-flag-waving tub-thumper; and Mr. Ben Tillett as a mischievous agitator. The working man was regarded as a noisy, drunken ne'er-do-well, and the trade unions as the avowed enemies of civilization. I have reason to remember the perfect hurricane of indignation which descended upon me when in an article dealing with the formation of the Bank Officers' Guild I ventured to point out that these wearers of the black coats were bringing themselves into fraternal line with the men who delivered the letters over the counter or who shovelled coals down the grate of the area. Every new member who went to swell the tiny Labour Party at Westminster appeared to hasten the day of our national eclipse. Ostenta-

[1] *The Nation*, February 12, 1921.

tiously the middle-class man went to the poll and voted Tory, but in so far as he was actuated at all by serious contemplation his vote was a gesture of disgust and contempt of the "pampered proletariat," enjoying the amenities provided by the taxation of the suburbans.

In the light of the changes which the war precipitated, however, these generalizations, undoubtedly true of the suburban mind a few years ago, have somewhat to be modified. For example, the intensified economic pressure which occurred bent the energies of the men and women to the stern task of meeting increased costs on an income the value of which progressively diminished. It was an effective check upon the luxury of pretension, and the solemnity of thousands of hardy young men going overseas, probably to meet their death, fixed attention upon grim realities. And it had a further important effect. It tore away the veil and exposed the shallow shams of the plutocrats. The suburbans saw some of their own number—small business men, adventurous clerks and the like—rise to riches by the great emergency; they saw how the plutocrats waxed fat, enjoying life prodigally whilst the true aristocrats toiled and died for England. There can be no doubt that this awakening to the truth created among the middle classes, as among the workers, a profound dislike for the crude and vulgar display of wealth, especially war wealth. No man who now associates himself with domestic politics or social affairs can fail to see that in these directions also notable changes have been taking place. There is a much-quickened interest in national and municipal affairs among the suburbans; it is forced

upon them by their plight—by the doubling of rates, by the trebling of the income-tax, by the alarming advance in the price of season tickets, the increased school fees, all of which have directed their attention to those movements which call for decreased public expenditure and more efficient control of the bureaucracy.

Tradition dies hard, however, and the majority of these people are still to be found voting with the old predominant party. But they are clearly not so slavishly Tory as they once were, and the Coalition certainly cannot look to them for the unquestioned support which such an immense number extended to it in the General Election of 1918. The defection, where it has occurred, has had two directions. In the one case it has assisted the return of independent candidates like those of the Anti-Waste Party, a very natural reaction. In the other case it has been directed towards the Labour Party. Labour votes at several of the by-elections, notably Dartford, where Mr. Mills had a sweeping majority of 9,000; Woodbridge, where the wealthy Mr. H. D. Harben was within 1,000 of victory, indicated that a good many of the middle class had been won over. That at first sight appears to be a most extraordinary change, for an explanation of which one might well search in vain. There is, I think, a very simple interpretation. One must not assume a violent reversal of middle-class dislike for the working population into admiration and co-operation. It is doubtful whether there has been any substantial change in the attitude of mind of the suburbans to the industrialists. What has undoubtedly occurred is a recognition that there is

a much closer affinity of material interest between the suburb and the manufacturing centre than ever the suburban had dreamed of before. The suburban sees that Labour is fighting for many things which, if secured, would be of great advantage to him. In order that he should see it, the Labour Party with much foresight has selected Parliamentary candidates who are likely at once to drive home the appeal and to commend themselves to villadom—candidates from their own class, such as Army officers, University professors and teachers, prominent writers, barristers, solicitors, doctors and architects.

Nor are some of the suburbans merely voting Labour. They are in many cases joining the local parties and taking office in them, not so much to assist the workers in their march towards emancipation as to ensure that the Labour Party in formulating its programme and policy shall express, as far as it may be persuaded to express, the mind and need of the middle class as well as the mind and need of the workers by hand.

3. *Bulwarks of England.*

Against a study of these less attractive and desirable features of suburban life, tempered as they now may be by the many changes of the war, what can be said that is more pleasing and encouraging? Let us by all means have the light with the shade, for nobody would fairly suggest that the note of criticism is final. The middle classes do, indeed, possess wholesome qualities which years ago led one statesman to describe them as the backbone of

England, and it so nearly expressed the truth that it has remained in constant use. Those qualities start in the home, where reigns so much family devotion, so much common ambition, so much mutual sacrifice, to assist a son or daughter, brother or sister, in a career. And always, in the battle to win through against those tremendous odds, some of which I have attempted to describe—a battle valiantly fought, and hardly on any occasion surrendered—there is exhibited a tenacity of will and faith that places the middle-class strongholds among the glories and hopes of England. That sentiment is deepened as we see how the eager and interested minority of men and women, usually from the minor professions, who years ago were busily engaged in forms so many and varied of communal amelioration, not only have stood by their tasks, but have in many suburbs increased and strengthened in numbers. They are the people who take their religion and their politics seriously, who officer the churches, chapels, the Sunday-schools, the Brotherhoods, and those organizations which organize and endeavour to educate the widened electorate. They are to be found also officiating on public bodies; they run the voluntary institutions such as libraries, musical societies and literary clubs. They are the men and women who keep alive in the suburbs that association with the arts which lifts the lower middle class far above the intellectualism of the workers. Yet these are the people who are least self-conscious of their superiority in knowledge and opportunity. They are the ones who drink fairly deep of learning from the facilities offered by our cheap literature, and who, in the spirit

of Freemasonry that knowledge nurtures, would open to the industrialists, gladly and without stint, the great secrets of learning which lie at the foundation of social equality.

But a further fact to be laid to the credit of the middle classes, and vital not only because it is another one common to them all, but because it is their greatest practical justification, is their ability to discharge those executive functions of government, commerce and industry upon which modern life is based. This is their tradition. It has persisted through three, four and five generations, and if to-morrow we were suddenly deprived of their services our great machinery of civilization would, I suppose, stand still.

Visualize, if you can, the Post Office, the banks, the schools, newspaper offices, the majority of our shops, our counting-houses, our factories, mills, railways and shipyards all bereft of those millions of men and women whose administrative skill now keeps them in action. It is not difficult to see that a general strike of the middle classes might have results as paralysing as a general strike of the workers, for a ship without the practised hand of a captain at the wheel, be its engines ever so powerful, can afford very little security to its passengers. The truth is that we cannot do without the suburbans. They make an indispensable contribution to the general well-being, and the worker who imagines them as a species of imitative parasite, living upon the labour of the mass, or the rich individual who scorns them as useless because he simply has not the brains to see their use, alike need enlightenment. For the work of the middle classes is complementary

to that of the manual toiler, and as necessary; but for them the rich man would no longer enjoy a great part of his riches, and would be forced to the dreadful expedient of earning his own living.

The truth that at present it is only from the suburbs that we draw those men and women who can contribute service so necessary to the ordered communal life is beginning to be more widely realized. To that extent the revolt has justified itself, for it has attracted to the suburbs a keen and penetrating searchlight, revealing facts which the nation cannot easily ignore or forget. Because it is so, because people are beginning to see to what an extent modern civilization depends upon them, and because, as a result, they themselves are more definitely conscious than ever before of their true place in our national life, their protest against the disabilities with which they are condemned to struggle daily expands in its volume and its indignation. The bank clerk who has to keep a wife and family on £250 to £300 a year, and, as the President of the Guild has affirmed, in some cases to go without lunch that those at home might be fed; the teacher who thinks he is well paid if he can get £300 a year; the provincial journalist with his beggarly minimum of four guineas a week; the clerk who writes to a morning newspaper that he is getting four pounds a week while machine hands—employed by his firm on piece work—earn double that sum; the clergyman in the busy parish and his curate too (there are many scores of them), with a beggarly pittance of from £200 to £300 a year—"You talk of our services," they cry, "and you are crushing us and grinding us to powder between

the upper millstone of the Rich and the nether millstone of the Manual Workers. Is not," they ask, " the labourer worthy of his hire ? "

No smooth phrases, no well-turned admiration, no approving reflection on the part of their admirers that they have voted steadily for law and order, that they have stood always for the glory of the Empire, that they have rigidly discharged their duty, will now give the suburbans their quietus, for they are only too conscious that honeyed words will not pay the butcher's bill ; that they will not be accepted to meet income-tax demands.

It is because of these facts that we have now reached the parting of the ways. Failing a more generous, not to say logical, material recognition of their worth, the nation is threatened, sooner or later, with their extinction. They have no wish to disappear ; they are engaging with much vigour in combat with the forces that menace them. They are organizing, and they are doing it far more successfully than anyone ten years ago would have considered possible. In this connection one thinks not so much of the Middle Classes' Union, a euphemism for the Strike-breakers' Union, at whose offices idle men and women with one, two, and three thousand a year form queues many yards long to volunteer for manual labour when a great industrial dispute is in progress ; one thinks rather of the many unions they have formed among themselves, to watch their own professional interests—the Bank Officers' Guild, the National Union of Journalists, the National Union of Clerks, the Society of Technical and Scientific Workers and the rest. All these many organizations, united as they are in the National

Federation of Professional, Technical Administrative and Supervisory Workers' Federation, more popularly known as the Black-Coated Workers' Federation, continues the struggle for survival. These workers by brain now total more than 350,000, and Mr. Bernard Shaw, when he addressed the first Annual Conference,[1] told them with characteristic wit that he was surprised to hear there was so much mind in the country. Unless the organizing efforts win for them a more secure economic standard, Mr. Shaw's joke will have about it the ring of prophecy. They simply will not continue, as a class, to exist under the new conditions. Already the decline has started. Young men and women of the suburbs are definitely refusing marriage because they will not face marital responsibility on the ill-reward that the professions offer them. To a bachelor in the twenties an income of £300 to £500 a year is comfortably sufficient for his own needs, but upon it family life is a mental strain of the first order. Similarly, a young woman with an income of £250, for which she works, enjoys easy independence. Only the brave and the resourceful will yield it up in order to make a little more serve the needs of a household. Some, indeed, do essay marriage, but they will not have children, or they deliberately limit them to one or two. They do not feel justified in making themselves responsible for children whom they would be incapable of supporting. Is there one change in our national life more disturbing than this? I doubt it. Can anyone view with equanimity economic conditions which result in an artificial limitation of the reproduction of that

[1] In February, 1921.

type of citizen to whom we look for so much, and whose birth should therefore be most encouraged? I think not.

Clearly, then, we must arrest their decline and fall. We must do so not simply because decent human motive would impel us to that effort, but because here is a class which is of marked value to the nation, and because we should definitely suffer by their extinction. How to save them is another matter. It will involve many changes in which the will both of the community organized in the State and of the individual also are involved. The distribution of the national income, the system of taxation, of rating, and many other factors, necessarily arise. But they are all capable of response to wise statesmanship, based upon the urgency of the times.

CHAPTER III

OUR MASTERS

1. *The Rise of the Plutocrats.*

SOMEONE has said that the world is a paradox. It is profoundly true that the close observer can point to facts in contemporary life which apparently negative each other, and which baffle the easy outlook of the average man. There is in England at this moment a greater display of riches than there has ever been before, yet poverty, deep, cruel and humiliating, manifests itself as ever. The age is nakedly materialistic, obsessed with things of substance and reality, but man nevertheless seems to sigh, like Nicodemus of old, for the Infinite Assurance, the rest and calm of the spiritual life. We reach out to this larger existence and it evades us—it eludes our grasp because we are fettered to the things of the flesh. The cynic views with a malicious satisfaction the evidences of the failure of human wisdom, and with his deadening sneer snaps his fingers in the face of the Reformer. It is an inevitable card for the fatalist; naturally, he plays it. Is there any feature of modern life which can be so well advanced to demonstrate the insecurity of the age and to arouse a spirit of pessimism than an intensive study of the lives of the rich—Our

Masters? I think there is not. Here again we are confronted by immense changes for which the war is responsible—the consolidation and extension of our plutocracy, and the headlong collapse of the old aristocracy. The war did not, of course, extend our national wealth; it squandered much of our accumulations in purely wasteful, non-productive expenditure. But it also completely revolutionized the personnel of ownership. Before the industrial revolution came upon us the rich families in England were the owners of the soil, and the merchant classes, in their way, were as staid, as proud, and as important a section of the community as the aristocrats themselves. The development of machinery and the rapid extension of our trade had produced, by the time Queen Victoria reached the zenith and decline of her reigning years, an entirely new class of commercial rich, men and women possessing a good deal of energy, some amount of brain, but hardly any education, and completely lacking in tradition. They were the founders of our modern plutocracy. The children were sent to a public school, and there some nonsense was knocked out of them, and some decent manners were driven into them, but no amount of external discipline could eradicate altogether from this second generation the influences of heredity and environment and though the third generation was much improved, strains of the character of its forbears would from time to time manifest themselves. But meanwhile the extending industrial system continued to increase these families of commercial opulence. In all the great industrial centres their numbers were multiplied enormously, and thus all the time that

the process of moulding and transforming the offspring of earlier conquerors was at work, still more were arising to carry on the influence of their predecessors. That was why, when the war came upon us, the plutocracy remained so firmly entrenched in our social system.

In the space of the five years following its numbers were increased by many thousands. All over the country, but especially in those centres where the population was engaged in manufacturing materials of war, or in maintaining its services, there arose like mushrooms on a dewy morning a great and powerful class of newly rich. Shipping, iron, steel, and clothing in particular brought to men great fortunes almost without initiative or effort. Those who were already prosperous became fabulously wealthy; those who were engaged in modest business—junior partners, and in many cases adventurous and audacious young clerks, who might, in the spring of 1914, have possessed a few hundred pounds, soon found that their wealth had increased a hundredfold. Some of it was directed towards party war chests, and there followed a descent of honours on a scale hitherto unheard of. Upon the old plutocracy, already established, there was showered an amazing succession of peerages and baronetcies. For the newer Olympians of commerce there was the humbler reward, the creation of the Order of the British Empire, shorn of nearly all its honour by the ridicule which followed the wholesale and totally indiscriminate bestowal of the decoration. So lavish did this distribution become that one notorious centre, Cardiff, became known in Wales as "The City of Dreadful Knights."

The very influences which so enormously increased, so firmly consolidated, so powerfully entrenched, the plutocracy, gave the *coup de grâce* to the old families of England. Income-tax and super-tax had already made serious inroads upon the standard of life of those whose wealth was in land or in fixed interest-bearing investments. But the war, as it progressed, compelled great increases in this levy upon unearned income, and this had to be borne, coincident with unprecedented advances in the cost of living. The result was a wholesale disposal of landed property, the closing down of stately homes, and the sale or letting of great town houses.[1] Some of them, indeed, have survived. They are mainly those who had inter-married with the rich commercial classes, or who, with more foresight and ability than the rest, had put their money into industrial undertakings, which automatically waxed fat on the fortunes of war—armaments, shipbuilding, coal, and the rest.

These, then, are Our Masters. Knowing who they are, let us ask how they live? Why a study of their mode of life induces pessimism? Can we see a glimmering of anything more hopeful by a deeper and more intimate study of its many phases?

When the Englishman assumes the rôle of moralist, and repeats with all solemnity the old adage that "Love of money is the root of all evil," the plain man, who hates hypocrisy, retorts, "Yes, but it's the root we like to see growing well." A great

[1] This subject, and its results in the countryside, are discussed at length in the following chapter.

and mighty Britain delves and digs, toils and spins, invents and organizes, and wealth accumulates beyond the dreams of avarice. How precisely is it distributed? How is it spent?

The looker-on is sometimes nonplussed by several features of the possessions and conduct of those who constitute the nation's millstone. There is, for instance, the positive inability of most men to grasp the real volume of wealth concentrated in the hands of the few. Talk in terms of hundreds of thousands, of the marketing of stocks and shares, the returns of overseas investments, is as Greek to him. But, as we have seen, he can realize what this wealth commands. He begins to know why he himself is poor. He observes the matter-of-fact way in which this wealth is dissipated.

Let us bear in mind one or two elementary facts concerning the distribution of the national income. One-third of it goes into the pockets of one-thirtieth of the population; 59,100 of these people enjoy incomes of £2,500 a year and upwards; 148 of them have incomes of over £100,000 a year. But the manner in which the nation's capital wealth is vested in the hands of the few can best be understood from the valuation of estates left at death. The year 1920 provided some notable examples. Ten persons died leaving over £1,000,000; two each left over £2,000,000; twenty left between £500,000 and £1,000,000; and nearly 250 left estates of from £100,000 to £500,000. A glance at the names of these deceased owners of super-wealth discloses the fact that in practically every case they were of the plutocracy rather than of Britain's ancient families, and a very large number had made their fortunes during and

by reason of the war.[1] The circumstances of a great national emergency, and the advantages brought to us by the scientific discoveries and mechanical inventions, have thus been appropriated by a small section of the nation, and have made that section rich beyond the dreams of an Arabian romance.

Complaint is made of the growing reward of labour, and politicians point to the increasing savings of the worker. But the fundamental fact remains that every year wealth is vested in fewer and more exclusive hands, and luxury, waste and idleness are the natural—indeed the almost inevitable—consequences.

2. *Squandermania.*

The life of the old aristocracy was leisurely, indulgent, with a keen but usually quiet enjoyment and appreciation of all those things within the reach of their abundant means. Life was lived mainly in the country, but there were occasional visits from the country mansion to the town house, and an interchange of hospitality with county families described so delightfully by some of the early nineteenth-century novelists. It was mainly a life of solid comfort, domestic felicity, of calm, well-ordered routine. It fitted very adequately the spirit of the time. But the rise and progress of the plutocracy

[1] A shipowner in his will, dated 1913, made certain reservations should his estate not yield more than £10,000. In 1920 it was valued at £158,000, nearly the whole of which was thus made during the war.

and the modern invention that is responsible for its existence has completely revolutionized the life and habits of the rich, for not only has it created the plutocracy, but it has entirely changed the way of life of the overwhelming proportion of the landed gentry who have preserved their wealth. These are now for all practical purposes twin classes, forming together that dominant element in the nation, which by power of possession and command over legislation and law are in very truth Our Masters.

The plutocrats are now occupying, in country or in town, the abodes of the aristocrats who have gently and quietly disappeared in the unequal struggle with the new conditions, or they live in great new houses built and designed to their own exotic tastes, for, asks Society, of what avail are riches if they do not proclaim themselves? This surplus wealth, so frequently embarrassing in its magnitude, simply invites circulation, and as a consequence we see, not unnaturally, a reckless, feverish expenditure, and an orgy of luxurious indulgence such as Solomon in all his pomp and glory could never have imagined. And it is ruled only by the degree of one's possessions. The man with £10,000 a year may get along with a house in Brook Street and a nice place in the Home Counties; not so the man with £100,000 a year. In his case it must be a mansion in, say, Carlton House Terrace—a huge establishment, dazzling in its brilliance, perfect in its appointments. One country seat becomes quite impossible, and the commercial conqueror buys his Scottish estate, his marine residence, his "cottage" at Marienbad or his villa at Nice. To the coach-house of yesterday is added the

garage of to-day, and motors are bought with less concern than that of the labourer when he takes a day excursion-ticket to the sea. "Where a dinner of a certain quality sufficed, now a dinner of a superior quality is demanded; where clothes, dresses, flowers, now *more* clothes, dresses, flowers." It is a striving among them all not for a definite standard of pleasure or human happiness, but a sickening effort at blatant ostentation, a rarely gratified endeavour to parade social superiority. The newest and most up-to-date yacht is in no sense necessarily a true measure of its owner's passionate delight in speeding over the sea at record pace. It is far more probably a measure of his successful operations on 'Change. A month's shooting in Scotland costs a sum equal to the annual salary of a Metropolitan magistrate. A day's golf and its incidental expenses the monthly salary of a London head-teacher. The family leaves town to travel North, and their journey absorbs more than the cost of furnishing a workman's home. The King patronizes the drama, and in keen competition the rich offer as much as fifty guineas for the use of a box.

Hotels and restaurants provide luxuries formerly unheard of, and the visitor with the cheque-book finds his every want most reverently anticipated. It is a form of wild insanity, the scattering of wealth, anyhow, anywhere, indicative of the complete abandon of its few possessors.

It is impossible persistently to read the daily papers without finding abundant manifestation of this vulgar display. A lady, suing for alimony under a judicial separation, estimates her dress-bill at £10,000 per year. Another leader of fashion,

sued for a dress-account, admitted an annual expenditure of between £8,000 and £9,000. A rare print, or a piece of furniture of a Royal household, is sold by auction for a thousand times its use-value. A piece of jewellery realizes £5,000, and the purchaser makes out his cheque without the faintest recognition of the real significance of his act. A Society journal tells us that "The demands on Mr. Scott, the Burlington Arcade dog outfitter for the coming winter include a dog's bedstead, fur coats, handkerchiefs, laced boots (half-a-guinea a set), silk-braided blankets, motor goggles, and nickel-plated foot-warmers for Fido when travelling."

This life is in part reflected by Mr. E. F. Benson in *The Osbornes*. There we see an ever-growing income, a perpetual striving for place and power, one long tremendous bid for recognition, a determined striving for a place in the seats of the mighty. After furnishing 92, Park Lane, Mr. Osborne would say: "Yes, there is £3,000 worth of seating accommodation in this room, and they tell me 'twas lucky to get the suite at that figure. Divide it up and you will find it averages £200 per chair. Seems funny to sit on £200, hey!" There are in post-war Society many youths educated to no definite useful purpose, endowed with wealth staggering in its immensity, dissipated in a riot of ambitious display.

At a moment when nearly three million men and women workers were unemployed, when by common admission thousands of good self-respecting citizens were bordering, with their children, upon starvation, and when men were actually being carried into hospitals dying for want of nourishing food, *The Times* wrote thus of the first State Ball given at

Buckingham Palace since 1914[1]: "It was the combination of almost ethereal delicacy with Byzantine magnificence in the dresses worn that struck the reminiscent eye most forcibly last night. The touch of slightly rigid solidity that was formerly *de rigueur* had given place to vaporous textures which, however, did not preclude gorgeous embroideries, shimmering pailleté tissues, exquisite old lace, or the modern oxidized variety, and, of course, jewels of regal brilliance which seldom leave the strong-room for less historic festivities. The preponderance, too, of ladies wearing orders was another feature which told of the passage of time since 1914. Altogether the scene, with its splendid military and diplomatic uniforms, with their multi-coloured sashes, the old-fashioned velvet Court dress, and a small sprinkling of the simplified form introduced this spring, was one of extraordinary brilliance and distinction."

Money—that is the key to this life of fashion—this "noisy, ostentatious and frivolous people, patricians and plutocrats, politicians and financiers, lawyers and tradesmen, actors and artists, who have scrambled to the summit of England's national life, and who, setting the worst possible examples in morals and manners, are never so happy as when they are making people talk about them."[2] It is all built upon money. One may be highly born, one may be clever, one may be daring, but all these qualities are of no avail if they are not backed by such an amount of wealth as will carry one through the maze of this exciting life. All but a small

[1] July 8, 1921.

[2] *The Glass of Fashion*, by a Gentleman with a Duster.

number of the aristocracy have fallen under the spell—they have "sold the pass to Dives." They have exchanged the badge of culture for the glittering bauble of Mammon. That is why a man may be completely ignorant, unlettered, graceless, incapable of a single decent impulse, but so long as he never resorts in vain to his cheque-book, he may assemble on the heights, and with effrontery march at the head of the nation. Once this standard has been set and accepted, the great task of the conformists is to maintain their position or to enhance it. They are often in a nightmare of dread lest anything should occur to cut short the carnival, and money is poured out into all sorts of constitutional and anti-socialist organizations officered by retired majors or renegade trade union officials. There is a widespread suspicion in Pall Mall clubs of every new evidence of the strength of political or industrial labour, and Mr. Philip Snowden is cursed as the arch-enemy of civilization by men and women who may one day have to thank him for saving them from the horrors of civil conflagration. They look upon Labour only as a helot class, created to make pleasant the path of those who have scaled those heights of fashion, and they expect the workers dutifully to continue that task. When they do not, when, for example, they cease work on a wages dispute, one gets a stupid outburst of anger, reflected in the inanities of Society journals like *Eve* or *The Tatler*, the correspondents of which can see, in the stoppage of the nation's coalmines, an impediment to their own pleasures and "not much fun for the poor dea *debutantes* to see their cherished entertainments mown down one after the other. All that is left

is a private dance or two, sandwiched in between the dry husks of the charity ball." So, "disgusted with the failure of civilization," these people fly to the continental centres of pleasure, there to escape the hardships of a coal-less England, and to nurse, under warm and sunny skies, their contempt for the miners.

But these people are governed by varying emotions. It would be quite wrong to sum them up as all deliberately oppressive in the maintenance of their social standard, pitiless towards the poor, conscious in their snobbery. Such traits may appear to predominate, for incidents sometimes arise which compel us to think so. When we hear of a woman who entertained soldiers' wives at a Christmas party, but told them to bring their own mugs, and served tea from old watering-cans, on tables without cloths, we are driven to choose between two possible states of mind—a gross ignorance of the mode of life of the working classes, or a contempt for their feelings altogether reprehensible. Mr. F. E. Green, in *The Tyranny of the Countryside*, gave some amazing facts concerning the rule by the iron hand, not only of the new plutocrats, but of some of the old aristocrats. I recollect a holiday spent in a fashionable hotel at the time of the last railway strike, when a woman, the owner of some of the most notorious slum areas in one of our big cities, seriously recommended the shooting of a few men to "bring the rest to their senses."

What has come to be known as "The Servant Problem" is the product not so much of insufficient wages as of the imperious commands in recent years of a too-exacting mistress, who frequently does

not understand the management and employment of a staff, who is querulous, intolerant and overbearing.

Turn to the other side of the picture, and among the minority we see a spirit of kindliness and sympathy, even of generosity. Mr. Benson has drawn for us a sweet character in Mrs. Osborne. Caught in the maelstrom of Society life, this wife of the Conqueror over Commercial Sheffield reveals, nevertheless, a natural grace, amiability, and love of family which must be characteristic of many in that exalted station. A friend tells me of one of the gayest women in Society who melts to tears at the story of human misery, pain and suffering, and who personally supervises the care of such unfortunates coming to her notice. There is something fine in that quiet, silent care of the flotsam and jetsam of modern civilization, and it rather indicates one of the most striking characteristics of Society. It may live its life of gaiety, it may indulge its extravagances, but it can rarely pause to observe and to think. It dare not, for observation and thought awaken conscience, and conscience has to be appeased. That is the moment when we get a surface interest in charitable work—drawing-room meetings for babies crèches, homes for fallen women, holiday camps, or missionary societies. These organizations of charity are largely financed by the very men and women who are foremost in the condemnation of the claim by the people to economic justice. We are invited to admire, and indeed to honour, the man who gives several thousand pounds to a hospital or to a university, but it is impossible to forget that those benefactions have not involved the donor in

a single act of self-denial, or that they are frequently a manifestation of a gradual approach to a prefix which will elevate him in his social career.

Yet it would be wrong entirely to leave out of account the fact that most of these people can be very charming and very agreeable. Some of them are clever ; they are amusing conversationalists, they are capable of deep family affections. In a word, they are human beings, with human feelings and emotions. It is to the accident of birth and inheritance, rendering serious contemplation unnecessary, the seizing of life's opportunities, or sheer good fortune, and the consequent accession to wealth at a time when the ingenuity of man appears able to provide anything that one could desire—it is to these varying influences, far more than any settled philosophy of reckless degeneracy, that the gravely disquieting manifestations may be attributed.

3. *Its Moral Degradation.*

But to any rational ear, the only note that our masters strike is the note of apprehension, almost of despair. For there is hardly anything in their lives to justify their existence. If they made some great and noble collective service to the State it would possibly help to allay the spirit of criticism. If, along with this astonishing display of the power of the purse, there was evidence of a corresponding contribution to the public good, a substantial effort towards the furtherance of worthier movements to raise higher ideals, then the verdict of the critic might be appreciably modified. But what do we

find? An almost total disregard of obligation. A life lived within itself, detached from all the serious problems of the age. Democracy grows increasingly impatient, and an unwilling Government promotes halting schemes of social reform. The rich find increased calls made upon their super-wealth, and when taxation is increased, they are impelled by horrible fear to denounce "legalized theft," to protest against "new burdens on already overburdened shoulders," and to threaten a still further emigration of capital! The Government prepares a great housing scheme; we are asked where we imagine the money shall come from. Some wise man advocates a more honourable recognition of worthy old age; the millionaire tells us the nation cannot afford it. Shall we have a public park? The city is too poor. Build a new cathedral? Quite impossible! Add to the Infirmary? If the poor will pay! Erect a public memorial? By the shillings of the suburbans!

This niggardliness in the matter of a recognition of public necessity is quite outshone by the miserable poverty of the contribution of the rich to culture and learning, but in view of their mode of life, what are we to look for? It is charged with no high purpose, no inspiration, no commendable aim; it strives towards no great goal; it cherishes no noble vision. The victors spend their earthly existence in a-flitting hither and thither in search of diversion, amusement, an escape from *ennui*. It is merely an alternating gaiety in town, large-scale entertaining in the country, with possibly a long sojourn in complete laziness on the Continent, or a visit to Malvern or Harrogate for the purpose of repairing shattered nerves and enfeebled constitutions. Any attempt

at useful work or intelligent study of things that matter is found only in the very few. "But they read," someone will say! Pray what do they read? Exciting novels, scandalous reminiscences, and the gossip in *The Times* and the *Morning Post*. "And sometimes they write!" Well, what do they write? A medley of travel, a denunciation of Socialism, or a defence of Protection. For one man like Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, we find hundreds of Piccadilly loungers.

Stripped of their money, these men would, and do, go straight to the wall in the battle of life. If Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Ormsby Gore represented the scions of our noble houses, or Lady Aberdeen and Miss Edith Picton Turbervill typified the women of their class, what a transformation might be wrought in this England of ours in ten years' time! I have happy memories of a visit to Ewenny Priory, the charming home of Colonel Turbervill, and the reply of his wife when I commented upon the many-sided social services rendered by their large family: "Every one of them," said Mrs. Turbervill, "has been taught to do something useful in the world." But how many other parents of families, ancient or modern, can to-day say that?

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of all in this saddening round is the tragedy of its moral degradation. Ethical and religious standards are always being shifted to meet the changing standards in the life of Fashion. One may quite often hear a man condemn "pitch and toss" who probably lost £100 the previous evening at bridge, and there is no studied hypocrisy in the fixing of this double code of morals for rich and poor. The rich seriously

believe that they are privileged to lay down a standard of conduct for the multitude to which they themselves cannot possibly be expected to subscribe. It is literally a dictation of the terms "Do as we say; not what we do." Fifth Avenue religion (rapidly gaining sway in England) is little short of organized blasphemy—a formal recognition of the Christian faith in theory, and a violation of its every precept in practice. Mammon and his subject rulers have in deep reality ousted God and outrivalled Christ. We might pass over this feature with less apprehensive regret were we not able to see how vitally it influences the lives of the less fortunate. Where class consciousness has not developed, we see the masses as well as the suburbans bowing before the accumulations of the mighty. The more they can ingratiate themselves with the rich, the higher they are regarded by their neighbours. Their contact with the conquerors produces not only admiration, but a desire to emulate. They, too, are seized with a determination to rise to this unstable eminence. Most of them fail in the effort, and from their failure springs hatred, envy, and ceaseless repinings.

"I would lay emphasis," says "A Gentleman with a Duster," "on the disastrous consequences of ostentation. I believe that nothing makes the work of the revolutionist easier than the ostentatious luxury of the rich. Its social consequence is bad enough, for it is vulgarizing the middle classes in battalions; but its political consequence may well be worse than anything we have yet known in our history. Ostentation of the kind which is now rampant in the public circles of fashion maddens the

atheistical brain of the man who has, with a talent for declamation, a struggle to exist."

Mr. W. H. Mallock, the arch-critic of democratic ideas and of Socialistic theory, has frequently combated a condemnation of the parade of luxury to which I have referred, by arguing that the increase in question is the measure of the increased *ability* of the conquerors. Years ago he crossed swords with Mr. Bernard Shaw on this amazing submission, and the dramatist-economist so completely shattered Mr. Mallock's theories that it is a matter for some surprise that he does not realize that "discretion is the better part of valour." Instead of maintaining a very wise silence, he proceeds, in reply provocatively to speak of "That portion [1] of the annual income which is at present in the hands of an exceptionally able minority." Any sane and normally balanced man will immediately dismiss this as an extraordinary example of grotesque fallacy. Mr. Mallock and his friends may argue, if they will, that the conquerors hold their wealth by Divine Right, or even by special dispensation from an overgenerous proletariat. This would, of course, be foolish, but not nearly so foolish as to say that the wealth concentrated in the hands of the few represents in any sense the measure of their superior ability over everyone else. Mr. Mallock lives among this class of people; he is of them, and he ought to know better, particularly when those who so completely squash his arguments only take dinner with them occasionally, or whose judgment is based on simple deduction from observation afar off.

We have already seen that their life is almost

[1] The portion of the rich.

entirely a life of idleness, their thought and action of bare mediocrity. The man who finances an oil-field and thus doubles his income possesses no special intuition as to the specific site upon which the wells should be sunk. That is the work of the very modestly paid surveyor. Or, the man who invests in a Welsh coalmine never dreams of finding out its possibilities for himself. He again depends upon the knowledge of his broker. Who will seriously suggest that country estates, which by special care and attention are made to yield an increased return, except in a very few cases owe that increase to the clever management and foresight of their possessors? The ownership of urban land is a delightful example of the puerility of Mr. Mallock's argument. A man inheriting 500 acres in a rapidly developing city suburb from his farmer ancestors might be an amiable ass, incapable of understanding the title deeds, but this will not debar him from receiving and enjoying the products of his valuable estate—a value created entirely by the activity of the people.

If we are to speak in economic terms, we must say that the super-wealth of the rich is the rent of possession. The rent of ability goes to those directors of industry and government who rarely receive more than £1,000 a year and frequently much less. The able inventor has to make the most of his patent during the first fourteen years of its registration. Afterwards, a company promoter can go to any nincompoop and persuade him to lend his capital for the purpose of exploiting the genius of the inventor without let or hindrance. "The obvious fact is," says Mr. Shaw, "that the

interest on railway stock is probably frittered away at Biarritz by people who could not invent a wheelbarrow, much less a locomotive!"

We are driven, then, to the conclusion that we are faced with a class, composed for the most part of worthless, irresponsible people, extracting a tremendous toll upon the supervising direction of the suburbans, and the constant labour of the masses, and who in return for their wealth make hardly a pretence at a contribution to the collective good.

There was a time when this dazzling life of the favoured few was regarded as a necessary stimulus to industry. Excepting a few elderly men and women with Victorian minds, nobody so regards them to-day. It is seen rather as symptomatic of an acute disorganization of our national resources, a scathing indictment of our failure to recognize the saner facts which ought to govern communal prosperity. The great aggregation of wealth, socially produced, is becoming almost completely divorced from social necessity. Capital is wasted through employment in the manufacture of degrading luxury for the very few. Labour is wasted because it is making motor-cars for the rich, whereas it should be making motor-omnibuses for its own transit; because it is making £3,000 suites instead of furnishings for its own cottages. The apparent benefit accruing to Labour as a result of producing for the demands of super-wealth is illusory because it ought not to be employed in producing luxury. The returns of the Census of Production demonstrate most distinctly that in addition to the ill-distribution of goods, we do not produce more than one-third of

the necessaries vital to a decent standard of life for the entire population.

It is not so much the parade of extravagance, nor is it the misapplication of the forces of Capital and Labour, that constitutes the gravity of this problem. These are very important contributions, but the danger lies rather in the illusion of the conquerors that their present life must of necessity persist through all time. "More than an age of adventure," says Mr. Masterman, "more than an age of reckless wickedness, does time judge and condemn an age of ineffectual pleasure."

The studied cultivation of social exclusiveness, continued indifference towards the multitude, a sweeping aside of the legitimate demands in remuneration, leisure, learning, and human opportunity, of the new social consciousness, and a repudiation of the demands of the National Exchequer, are persuading the people that this Reign of Wealth must cease. Its ultimate extinction is not in doubt, and the method rests with those who themselves provide the occasion of it.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW COUNTRYSIDE

1. *The End of a System.*

NOWHERE is the changed English order more manifest than in the countryside. One requires only to recall the conditions which prevailed in 1914, and to examine the new situation which the war has created, to see that a decisive revolution has been proceeding.

Eight years ago we were confronted by all the manifestations of decay in English agriculture. Farmers were wrestling with the most pressing odds, labourers were tiring of ceaseless toil for 15s. or 16s. a week and a dull life in a tiny broken-down cottage, and, with their wives and families, were deserting the soil for the urban areas. Cultivation was ceasing, and it appeared that the star of rural prosperity had definitely set.

That decline has, to an extent, been arrested. But there has been an acceleration of other changes, which even in 1914 had already done much to modify the old-fashioned existence on the soil. The way of life to which our fathers and grandfathers had been accustomed was gradually disappearing. To the effects of the war we owe the end of that system, and the question of real concern

now is what the ultimate consequences are likely to be.

Let us first consider some of the principal features of that old system. To the man of conservative mind it represented all that was best, most worthy, and most stable in the organized life of England. He looked upon it as permanent and eternal, and its gradual disappearance filled him with anxious questionings. Even to the man of more independent and radical temperament it had characteristics which he could unfeignedly admire, as assisting to produce a desirable race. What was this system? It was the old feudalism, very appreciably modified and tempered by the ceaseless change of the ages. Its foundations were laid in the ownership of the soil by ancient families—some large owners and very many smaller ones. These families had developed and were nurtured in a tradition which had become peculiarly English. Sometimes they farmed their own estates; generally speaking, they rented their land to tenants, who were the employers of the peasantry.

Such, in outline, were its main features. This life was open to abuse. Tyrannical agents could, and often did, make the lives of farmers a nightmare; farmers so harassed became harsh and unconscionable employers of labour. The small, easy-going squire could not be made to realize the peril and shame of insanitary farms and cottages. And the power and patronage of the possessors effectively robbed the farmer and the labourer of independence and judgment.

But there was another side to the picture. In this organism of the countryside there was a com-

munity of heart and mind, an intimacy and affection in contact which even democrats often admired and respected. There were exceptions, but the rule was that of a benevolent and paternal landlordism by which servants and tenants were cared for in sickness and in health—the price, admittedly, an obedient devotion. Hillcrist is the authentic type of it all, and those who have seen Mr. John Galsworthy's powerful play " The Skin Game " will know what I mean by that. Care for and interest in the village church and school, a court of reference or a fold of succour in dark and trying days—these were some of the things for which the landed classes of England stood, and upon which was based the social order.

The change, which had been developing for more than two decades was sensibly hastened by Mr. Lloyd George's Finance Act of 1909, which so materially increased taxation upon land and unearned income that many owners had to begin selling all or part of their estates. But it was the intolerable financial burden imposed by the war that precipitated the crisis.

There are all sorts of charges on landed property, e.g. income-tax and super-tax, tithe, rates and taxes, management, insurance, repairs and maintenance upkeep of garden and grounds, game, house expenses and repairs, annuities, family charges, and so forth. Some of them are inexorable ; they cannot be escaped from. As an illustration of their total weight, the Duke of Buccleuch has furnished a statement dealing with his Eskdale and Liddlesdale estates. This shows that in 1914 the total rental was £42,921 ; the net burden was

£8,689, an average of 4s. 0½d. per £. In 1920 the total rental had fallen slightly to £42,496, but the total net burden had increased to £22,799, and that is not the end of the story. The further charges of management, maintenance and repairs increased the grand net burdens from 5s. 6d. in the £ in 1914 to 19s. 7d. in 1920.

In face of these immensely increased burdens, few of the small landowners, and not many of the large ones, could survive, and for six years the county families have been rapidly disappearing before our eyes. Furthermore, with their wonderful fighting instincts, they went out almost as one man to battle and were literally mown down in it. One can point to whole families which were practically wiped out, and in which there are no children to fill the gaps. Those who remain, one will find living quietly in villas on the outskirts of big cities, or in old houses in the sleepy county towns.

But what of those who have taken their places? They are for the most part men of commerce who did well out of the war—some from the humblest ranks who have risen to the dizziest heights. The new civilization which we are developing in the countryside is completely alien to it, barren of all its old standards and traditions, entirely novel to its surroundings, and, if one may judge from observation, rather at a loss to know just what to do with itself. Its earliest struggles have compelled a keen recognition of the value and importance of money, a quality which develops in nearly everyone who has been compelled to work hard for what he possesses. This type of mind cannot understand the leisurely and often very improvident ways of

the old aristocracy, who frequently struggled along with a miserably small return on their property.

The new owners will tolerate none of that nonsense, as they conceive it. They are rather proud to be possessors of Colonel So-and-so's house and acres, or Sir John What's-his-name's broad stretches. But it will have to be a commercial proposition. That is already seen in the case of men whose fortunes, made during the war boom, have since shown signs of reaction. We may take it as a certainty that the land they own will be made to pay its way.

But let us be quite fair. Though this new class may have a strange notion of enjoyment, though its ideas of obligation may be distressingly crude, though it may treat its staffs and its retainers merely as it treats its factory hands—like so many units of a machine—and though it may have no idea that it ought to play the part of godfather of the village, or encourage the arts and the crafts —though, I say, all these things may be true, it brings to the countryside quicker and more alert minds, a keener perception and a wider intelligence. The question is, can it discipline its demonstrative commercialism with some understanding of and regard for the peculiar and rather delicate social structure into which it has thrust itself? I do not know; time alone can tell; but some very important issues depend upon the answer.

2. *The New Owners.*

Now consider the changed position of the farmer. By a strange irony of circumstance the war which

brought disaster to the landowner brought prosperity to his tenant. Farmers made a considerable amount of money during the war, and in the main took good care of it. Thus when the break-up of estates became inevitable, a large number of land-occupiers were able to buy up their holdings, and an important proportion did so. Many who did not, afterwards found themselves with a nice balance at the bank, or a great deal of new machinery and equipment. Their security of tenure is now practically assured.

This, in the course of a very short time, is going to have a notable effect upon agricultural life. Neither the squire as landowner nor the labourer as cultivator is the main key to success in the agricultural industry. Its success or its failure depends upon the organizing and executive ability, the driving force possessed by the farmer. His new status of possession or undoubted security is bound greatly to enhance the prosperity of the countryside.

Mark what is likely to happen. A farmer who knows that in a spell of good fortune he is the one who will benefit, that he need not fear its appropriation in the shape of increased rents, and the farmer who knows that in a spell of ill-fortune he need not fear the precipitate action of a harsh or embarrassed landlord, will work with all the greater energy and enthusiasm to make his farm a success and at the same time to increase the productive wealth of the country. All that, moreover, will, I think, be reflected in the farmer's attitude to his labourers. A man can always be more generous and reasonable in prosperity than in adversity.

More striking, perhaps, in this changing ownership is the rapid fashion in which land is coming into the

possession of the people. The chief agency of this change is the industrial co-operative movement, which is acquiring estates all over the country. Mr. George Thorpe, the chairman of the directors of the English Co-operative Wholesale Society, who is specially charged with the task of watching the agricultural affairs of the movement, has been closely engaged in advising as to the purchase of properties as they come upon the market, and the movement now possesses upwards of 50,000 acres. In addition to this, many of the big retail organizations, especially those bordering on agricultural districts, have also bought extensively, and now own among them almost as much as the Wholesale Society.

This development, of course, introduces an entirely new and novel element into English agriculture. The co-operative organizations are engaged in farming on the large-scale plan, and in most cases they are producing dairy foods and root-crops. The farms are managed by men appointed by the directors of the wholesale or retail societies which happen to own the property, and such managers are responsible for the entire affairs of the farm-land, labour, marketing, and so forth. This form of ownership severs completely every link with tradition; all the old relationships between owner and worker are gone, and the community life of the village as we knew it, even twenty years ago, has likewise vanished. It is really the substitution of the purely mechanical and impersonal method of the modern joint stock company in industry for the old-fashioned system of feudal relationship which I have already described. But there is this rather vital and essential

difference—there is a very considerable measure of social and economic independence. These workers, male and female, on co-operative estates are mainly themselves co-operators; that is to say, they are members of the societies owning the land, and they can attend the meetings of those societies, question this, or suggest that, and, in general, exercise a considerable amount of control over the conditions under which they work.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that in many instances these co-operative societies have improved conditions of rural life almost beyond recognition. They have put up new and better types of houses, shortened the hours of labour, created social amenities, and, in fact, quite transformed these little corners of the countryside. It is surely obvious that these successes have only to become known for their example to be widely followed, and for the influence to spread itself even more powerfully throughout the country.

A further development on rather similar but more restricted lines has also come to my notice. It is the collective purchase by villagers of land in the vicinity of their homes. There have been two or three instances of this, but quite the most interesting is the scheme upon which Mr. J. F. Mason, formerly M.P. for Windsor, experimented. One of Mr. Mason's Oxfordshire farms came into the market, and he conceived the idea of selling a portion to a company to be formed of any men of the village, or of his estate, who cared to be associated with the enterprise. A number responded, and about twenty acres were bought by them in the name of the North Leigh Land Company, Ltd,

with money advanced by Mr. Mason on mortgage, to be repaid by instalments over twenty years, interest at 4 per cent. being charged meanwhile. The Company then distributed the twenty acres thus acquired among its members in accordance with their need and capacity. A small profit was made on the transaction by the Company, and facilities for deferred payment were given to the members.

To say that this experiment has prospered is to express the matter very mildly indeed. Attracted by it, fifty-six persons have now joined the enterprise, and an additional 100 acres of land have been acquired, the total cost of the communal estate now amounting to £4,600. Some piquant incidents of the new ownership could be related. It has to be remembered that the men consist for the most part of gardeners, carters, village craftsmen, and a few factory hands employed in the Witney blanket mills—men who hitherto have had no opportunity of realizing the obligations devolving upon ownership One incident will serve to show how they are beginning to realize those obligations. Some time ago one of the farm buildings was reported by the inspector of the local authority to be in need of new slating. The work, it was found, would be costly, and the men were much averse to defraying the expense. But it had to be done, and provision from the funds had to be made accordingly. In such ways are men learning the duties as well as the privileges of land ownership.

3. *A "Merrie England" once again?*

From all these manifestations of change in the countryside—the growth in ownership on the one hand by plutocrats and on the other by the workers, one central fact, I think, emerges. It is this: the benevolent despotism of rural England is definitely, and indeed rapidly, coming to its inevitable end. We are at last witnessing the final extinction of a social order which linked this present England with the England of the Conqueror and his Norman system. The industrial revolution did much to destroy its ancient power, and I doubt not that historians of the future will date its complete fall from the catastrophic influences of the Great War.

In one respect we appear to be moving backward, but it is towards the recovery of one of the most cherished characteristics of our "Merrie, Ancient England," and thus in no sense a retrogression. Throughout England there is progressing a great effort to banish that deadly monotony which, ten years ago, rendered an English village the most despairing feature of the countryside. It seeks to restore the old brightness to rural life, to make it fuller, freer, and more attractive to an emancipated generation. The fresh outlook which the village soldier obtained, and which he has largely conveyed to his wife, sets in motion an acute discontent with an existence which, apart from the working day, could offer nothing more attractive than hours spent in a poky cottage or country lanes, or at the crossroads, or a noisy and often noisome public inn.

To effect this change many influences are at work. Village clubs are being opened, women's institutes are being set up, political and recreational organizations are starting, and there is a striking and welcome awakening in the Churches. In all these things the villager is showing a keen interest, for there can be no doubt that the intelligence of the rural worker is, according to his record and his opportunity, showing an advance even greater than that of the town worker. The clubs, where they have been opened, are proving the shortest cut to the re-establishment of the social and communal life of the village. They are usually the centre and pivot of physical and mental recreation and amusement; they are open to everybody, and they are entirely free from any element of patronage, self-supporting, and controlled by a committee democratically elected. One of the difficulties, which must necessarily limit the usefulness of these institutions, is the isolation of the village community. Imagine the lot of a man or woman of action and ideas living in a spot eight miles from a railway station, far away too from the beaten track of the charabanc. It was from such a place that a returned soldier recently wrote to the newspapers saying that a month of such an existence would "drive him dotty." Life-long association with the same few score men and women, varied only by the most occasional journey to a market town, cannot even be compensated for by a village club with an eternal routine either of pleasure or profit inside its walls. There is one way of abolishing such isolation; it has been discovered and applied in Oxfordshire, where all the clubs are linked up in a county federation, and its

machinery at once makes the members sharers in a life larger and wider than their own.

A Ford car links up the institutions, carrying from one to another cinematograph apparatus, boxing outfit, dancing teachers, lecturers, and what not ; and a motor lorry carries concert parties and amateur actors with their equipment from village to village.

Not less notable is the initial success of the women's institutes. The idea came from North America only six years ago, and now there are nearly 1,000 scattered throughout the country. They are having the widest influence in the countryside ; women go to their meetings, finding in them just those opportunities for social intercourse and the acquiring of useful knowledge which have hitherto been denied them. All sorts of home affairs and questions of the day are discussed there—cooking, housing, public health, infant welfare, dressmaking—and lending libraries, magazine circles, and facilities for home industries are provided. Perhaps more interesting is the effort they are making once again to establish rural industries in the villages, something to occupy the girls who must earn their living, and enable them to do so without the necessity of going to service in the towns.

We have not yet moved so far that the influence of the Church has ceased to count in the countryside. The parson still remains a powerful personality, but his alliance with the mansion and the manor house is clearly less close, for the reason that economic changes has made him so poor that he does not care to go there, as frequently he must do, shabby and down at heel. And there is the reverse side of the

matter—many of the new owners of England are as near pagan as they can well be. They have little use for the Church, and none for poverty, even though it be hidden in a vicarage. These economic changes have also greatly modified the old patronage of the parson towards the cottager. When, as in a case which recently came to my notice, there is going into the home of a labourer, with two or three stalwart sons, £15 a week, and a parson must "carry on" in a huge vicarage with £150 a year and a tiny private income, the *raison d'être* of patronage vanishes at once. Because of his improved economic status, and because, also, of his increasing knowledge and broadened outlook, the rural worker now finds himself much nearer the level of the parson than he did ten years ago. He is still a man of single mind, however, still keenly gratified at kindly help, and ready to follow a lead when it is given with disinterest, free from any dictation. The happily minded, good-hearted clergyman has now a great and indeed unique opportunity of wiping out much that was odious and distasteful in the attitude of his predecessor from the minds of the people, and by sympathetic understanding of the great changes that are now occurring—completely capturing the goodwill of the people, and rendering much fine service to the moral and social welfare of the rural communities. A good many are doing so; they were moved by that remarkable document, the Report of the Archbishops' Committee on the Church and Rural Life, with proposals which laid down a new charter of hope, aspiration and justice for the country people, demanding freedom to express their personality,

a definite improvement in the material standard of their lives, and an improvement in cottage accommodation.

These active stirrings in the dry hours of village life are to a great extent the measure of the revolution that is proceeding in every branch of our agricultural system.

But the most important question affecting us at the moment is what do all these many changes portend? It is extremely difficult to prophesy, but certain conclusions are, I think, inevitable. I think, for example, it may with safety be said that democracy is now rapidly securing itself in the saddle. The men and women of the countryside are ceasing to be vassals (as, indeed, until a few years ago, they were) of an old and hereditary aristocracy. They are gradually, by force of circumstances, or by purely voluntary effort, being severed from the old system of rule by the squire, from the tied cottage, from dictatorship in politics, from doles handed out in sickness and in old age, with, perhaps, the kindliest and most considerate thought.

They are gradually becoming their own masters; in some cases they own, or are purchasing, their own dwellings; I hear of some cases where, far from timidity at the exercise of the franchise, they actually dominate the local district councils, and instruct their officials to make some very firm and drastic representations to local landlords. Young men own motor-cycles; they preach Radical and Socialist politics on the village green; they control the village institutes, daringly hold iconoclastic lectures, promote fancy-dress dances and whist drives.

Look for the old spirit of servitude, and, unless it

be in the remote by-ways, or in the minds of the very old, you will find it not. Instead, you will find some measure of self-assurance, budding independence, a people enormously more enlightened than they were even twenty years ago—a people not only conscious of their power, but determined to exercise it.

Against this growing consciousness neither the *nouveaux riches*, nor the remnants of the old families, nor the farmers can very long stand out. How many people realize that nearly one-third of the agricultural labour of this country is now organized in trade unions? Over 200,000 of them have been secured by the Agricultural Labourers' and Rural Workers' Union; another 100,000 are members of the National Union of General Workers and two or three of their leaders have seats in Parliament.

The remarkable fight against the Government's decision to abolish the Agricultural Wages Board, waged all over rural England, plainly indicated the immense power that has come to the rural workers through their organization and their determination, which, it appears, nothing will quench, to retain that measure of emancipation which they have already won for themselves.

These foundational changes are bound to have their repercussion in the wider arena of industrial England. Hitherto, our factory and workshop labour has been largely recruited from the countryside. In one respect it has been good, for these men and women have brought a new physical fitness—perhaps more brawn then brain—to the great manufacturing centres; on the other hand, with a low standard of life, they have been content to work for less than

the town-bred man, and in many cases have reduced wages, with a consequent drop in efficiency. But if agricultural labour is really going to become independent, well paid, and generally attractive, if we are really going to bring back light and laughter to the villages, we may be sure that the exodus to the towns will cease. Will the disabilities following on the loss of this recruitment and the propagation of their like be compensated for by their removal from a competitive wages market? Nobody yet knows. But it may with fair certainty be said that the appearances are all in favour of stabilization of the economic well-being of industrial workers, and since a low standard, created by poor wages, generally means inefficient labour, there are reasons for believing that it will all be to the general good.

Looking over the foregoing pages, it seems necessary to emphasize the fact that I have been discussing tendencies rather than accomplishments. Great though be the changes now in process, and widespread though be the new spirit in rural England, it has to be remembered that the revolution is yet in process; by no means has it reached its final stages, upon which we must wait for many years to come. But it is necessary to ask whither we are being led—what the revolution has in store for the England of the future. Nobody who realizes the strength of human sentiment and the binding power of tradition can remain entirely unmoved at the dissolution of these forces. We are yielding up something that has endured for 800 years, something tangible, something substantial, something upon which our civilization has been firmly founded. But you cannot have existing side by side political

democracy and economic subjection ; the two states are altogether incompatible, and the one was bound, sooner or later, to be followed by its complement.

For a time we may expect to see the old intimate relations between the servant and the master, who has been superseded by a representative of the new plutocrats, give way to a good deal of struggle, contest, and probably many a hard-fought industrial battle. But once the new landowner is made aware that the war which so greatly changed him also no less greatly changed the agricultural worker, and once he realizes the new power of the agricultural organization, I think there will be a settling down to the new conditions and a mutual acknowledgment of each other's position which will materially increase the prosperity of English land.

Meanwhile, the process of community ownership is certain to expand. It may not do so without encountering pitfalls. But the spirit of the times, the expansion of knowledge among the masses, and clear demonstrations of what can be done, all go in its favour. So far as this phase of new ownership is concerned, nearly everything depends upon the staying power of the co-operators—whether they are developing, or can develop, that balance which will enable them to solve problems of control by themselves, to weather economic crises, and to bridle dangerous ambition. If they can do those things, I believe we shall get ultimately something like an agricultural commonwealth, which promises a greater future for rural England than many of us may yet realize.

CHAPTER V

OURSELVES AND THE WORLD

1. *A Destroyed Isolation.*

No consideration, however fleeting, of the new England that the war has produced would be complete if it ignored the fact that our position in the world has undergone profound modification and change. We have been turned from a creditor to a debtor nation; we have lost the old commercial supremacy to the United States. Our relations with the British Dominions overseas have been revolutionized, and our association with foreign States and peoples has been entirely readjusted. Not the mere fact or extent of these changes, however, is a matter of concern; it is the relation of these many changes to the condition of England, their effect upon the minds and lives of the people, their domestic consequences, and whether those consequences are for good or ill.

To all classes the most immediate shock of the war was the revelation of how deeply such a world-wide struggle changes the even tenor of existence. The dislocation of industry, the creation of an immense force of labour, to be moved at the will of those in authority in the service of the nation, the sudden discovery of high prices, the jump in

taxation, the staggering readjustment of personal possession, and the mobilization from all classes of the effective manhood of the population—these, outstanding among all other things, brought to the people a realization of how intimately their fortunes and their very lives were bound up in the nation's relations with foreign countries. For when the war came upon us the men and women of England knew hardly anything at all of the true nature of our foreign relations. This ignorance was dispersed evenly among all classes. The majority of men and women wended their way through life unaware of diplomatic complications for the reason that they were either too busily employed in the struggle for existence, or too hotly engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, or just too lazy and indifferent to pay any sort of attention to world issues. Nor, indeed, was any effort made, excepting by a few unofficial enthusiasts, to awaken them from their torpor, or to enlighten their darkness. Diplomacy was secret; it was surrounded by mystery. Parliament was fobbed off with meaningless, evasive and deceitful statements wrung from the Olympians of the Foreign Office who believed, and who, being still in power, yet believe, that Treaties and understandings are beyond the ken of the average man, whose duty is not to understand but, when told, to fight.

Our position as an island kingdom, our slight association with foreigners, and the prejudice that had always surrounded them here—all these factors contributed to our pre-war racial exclusiveness and our lack of concern, and knowledge of the gatherings of the international clouds. When they broke, men hardly knew why; they accepted the explanations

of the Olympians, they fought either to vindicate Belgium, to end militarism, or just because they were told, and presently made, to fight. Practically every man and woman who stayed at home was, as someone aptly remarked, "in it up to the neck."

We are now through it. What change has it effected in the minds of the people? Do they perceive more—understand more—of the importance of foreign affairs? Are they more intelligently equipped for world citizenship? Certain conclusions are emphatic, inevitable, and will be generally conceded. For instance, the war has effectively destroyed our one-time isolation. That is to say, most men and women no longer envisage England as the only part of the universe with which they need have concern. More practical geography and ethnography was taught by the sending abroad of millions of soldiers and the coming to England of the Belgian refugees and our Dominion armies than has been assimilated in the elementary schools for fifty years. Men and women have become actually conscious of the existence of other countries, and the fact that they are peopled by other men and women of similar flesh and blood if of dissimilar habits. Discovery that there is such a thing as the interdependence of nations has inevitably followed. During the war men and women found that many things they regarded as essential to the satisfaction of their human needs were scarce or unattainable, not because they lacked the money to buy them, but because they came from abroad, because importation had stopped, and because we could not produce them at home. Similarly they discovered, after the peace, that they were unemployed in great numbers

because the greatest markets for our manufactures are abroad, and people abroad could not buy because they could not pay. It is these extraordinarily simple home truths, hitherto realized mainly by the few people of serious contemplation, which have become the enlightenment of the majority. That it has, to a certain extent, quickened interest in foreign affairs there can also be no doubt. The fact that we are at this moment at peace with Soviet Russia is due hardly at all to the wish and desire of the British Government, but to the firmly expressed will of the people, for nothing was clearer, in the summer of 1920, than the fact that if Mr. Winston Churchill had carried out his grandiose plan to wage war against the Bolshevists there would have been a general strike by British Labour. It was not, as a good many superior people imagined, an anti-war movement, deriving its strength from a few doctrinaire leaders. It was a sudden and spontaneous uprising by the entire ranks of the workers, manifested as strongly among the black-coated men as among those who toil by their hands. And it was so insistent that the Government had to acknowledge and to obey. Not only would there have been few recruits of dependable type; there would unquestionably have been a revolution.

The striking fact in this connection is that by far the greatest change has occurred among the people. Despite their exercise of the facilities for travel, and the inclusion, frequently, of one or two foreigners in their own circle of friends, our plutocratic class has troubled very little about foreign affairs, and, unless it be a Frenchman or an Italian with a high-sounding title, has eschewed the company of the immigrant

and the traveller. The great increase in the foreign news services and of newspapers which such people read has compelled a somewhat close acquaintance with world problems. In some cases it has compelled a new and more informed, more intelligent outlook upon contemporary world issues, and some of them, like General Thomson in *Old Europe's Suicide* and Mr. Hamilton Fyfe in *The Making of an Optimist*, candidly and eloquently express it.

2. *Fruits of Ignorance.*

All that is the fact of change, and very few will dispute it. But the matter cannot end there. To what extent has this change produced in the minds of Englishmen and Englishwomen the qualities that England needs to-day? To what extent, for instance, has it dissipated the ancient prejudice against the people of a foreign country, produced an international mind, given us a genuine European outlook, or induced sane ideas about the British Empire? To postulate such questions is to provoke unpleasant answers. Take the first one; apply it to the ex-enemy countries. It is true that much of the hatred of the war period has gone, but there remains a very large number of people in all classes who think the Germans deserve all they have suffered, and a smaller number who would rejoice at their annihilation. It is suspicion, distrust and dislike of another race, accentuated by the passions of war. Even the spontaneous sympathy which was expressed for Belgian refugees was not strong enough to eradicate those inherent defects from the British

mind. The refugees were of different habits; they had a different faith; they spoke a different language, and the consequence was that when they returned home these people who had been welcome guests were speeded as departing nuisances. There is still in England the most grotesque misunderstanding of and aversion to Americans. They are regarded as aggressive, selfish boasters, who came into the war for what they could get out of it, and are supposed to be working feverishly with the object of capturing entirely Britain's foreign trade. How far we yet are from an international mind—that is to say, a collective mind that has the will and the capacity to support the machinery that would guarantee, as nearly as it can be guaranteed, world co-operation and peace—is seen in the attitude of the country to the League of Nations. The League of Nations Union, its great propaganda organization in this country, has out of a population of over 47,000,000 only about 167,000 members. When it held a popular demonstration in Hyde Park, and by enormous advertising invited all London and its environs to attend, I walked around the several platforms and judged that not more than four or five thousand persons were present, practically every one already convinced supporters of the League. To say that we are now as far as ever from the attainment of a European outlook would perhaps be an exaggeration, but a people that possessed it would not have sanctioned or tolerated the wilderness called peace that its leaders concocted, nor would they at by-elections return the candidates who are pledged to support its guilty authors. As to the Empire, its existence is accepted, and that is about

the end of the matter. The terrific problem of future constitutional relations, the grave issue of citizenship within the Empire, are the concern of the tiniest minority, expanded a little at critical moments, when, for example, the Imperial Conference is sitting or the papers are filled with a particularly downright speech by Mr. Hughes, the Australian Premier.

All these questions will go a great way towards the determining of the future of Western Civilization and our position in it. Yet the conclusion of anyone who ponders the matter can only be that in not one of them are we, as a people, sufficiently equipped for our enormous responsibilities. The immediate need of our time is a serious and widespread realization that the war itself and the pernicious peace are the fruits of ignorance, whether it be the ignorance sedulously cultivated by our governors or the ignorance of mere indifference and sloth; and that if England is to play her part in the restoration of the world on a basis that will ensure its peaceful progress and development, the people of England must awaken or be awakened to the call of the hour. They are the arbiters of our future; they it is who can say to the Government in power, "You must reverse your policy," and, if that fails, can turn them out of office when the appropriate moment arrives.

What will this reversal of policy involve? In the first place, the restoration of Central Europe as a great industrial community. It ought to follow naturally upon recognition of the fact that the Treaty of Versailles violated nearly every law of social and political economy, and that the great

need of the time—political security and economic well-being—can be effected only by international co-operation. One step has been taken: the indemnity has been modified, and more reasonable terms of payment by Germany have been agreed upon. But it should be clear to the veriest dolt that Germany cannot discharge her indebtedness if she is not permitted to restore the machinery of her commerce. The first essential is the re-establishment of her credit which the war destroyed; then she must have access to raw materials and all the economic facilities that will enable her again to produce, and the distribution of the railway stock, agricultural machinery and coal should be revised in accordance with the pressing and vital needs. It is, however, the general spirit rather than the letter of peace that we most urgently require. "I do not think," said Mr. McKenna, the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, early in 1921, "that there can be much doubt as to what Europe needs at the present time. She needs peace, not merely the peace of facts and treaties, but peace born of the spirit of peace, when the nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks. The Governments of Europe have made peace, but they have not yet accepted the conditions of peace. Once these conditions are accepted, the way will be made clear before us. The European States will be able to bring their expenditure down to the limits prescribed by their revenue; the issue of paper currency will cease; the exchanges will be stable; confidence will revive; and full employment will follow."

This brings me to the question of our relations

with France. Much of the evil to which her statesmen committed England during the past three years was, in the first place, insisted upon by the diplomatists of the old order across the Channel. France occupies a special position in the European scheme. She has vanquished, with Allied help, her unmerciful foe of fifty years ago, and she has sought to repeat the Bismarckian policy of ruining her enemy. In the attempt she has dragged along with her the British Government, a good many highly placed men, and she has almost compassed our general demoralization. The very fact that if we are to restore prosperity we must undo so much that has already been done at the bidding of France is proof that no scruples of friendship between the French and English peoples must prevent us from calling a halt, refusing forthwith to be an instrument of French Chauvinism, whether it be directed towards Germany, Russia, or the undeveloped countries of the earth. It would quite easily be possible to pay too high a price for our particularly intimate friendship with France.

Nor are our immediate relations with the United States satisfactory, though they have been improved by the Washington Conference. Deep down in the minds of everybody here who gives an instant's thought to the subject there should be the firm conviction of the truth that the two great English-speaking countries of the world will in all probability stand or fall together. Both have developed rapidly and far in modern civilization. Our interests are similar, our peoples are closely related ; we do an immense mutual trade ; and the fact that England now owes her £8,000,000,000 means that the

economic fabric of America depends very largely upon our capacity to honour our obligations. Yet the estrangement, not so much of Governments as of peoples, is obvious and notorious. In England some particularly distasteful national figures like Mr. Bottomley and, to a lesser degree, certain manipulators of the powerful Press, have brought nearly every conceivable argument to bear upon ill-informed and already clouded minds, and have fanned into flame such a fundamental aversion to the Americans that their very presence in streets and restaurants is often the signal for demonstrations. In America the strong Irish and German elements, both of them with a grudge against England, and assisted by the powerful Hearst Press, have there spread and fostered a keen and resentful anti-British feeling. It is little consolation that on the whole the relations between the respective Governments are good, and that the concordat between the intellectual leaders of the two countries is almost complete. The time has come when policy, like government, should be "broad based upon the people's will," and inflamed popular passions may very easily destroy wholesome relations between governments. The amount of error that still requires to be corrected in England regarding America is stupendous, but until it is achieved we cannot hope for full co-operation and those blessings of full co-operation that we urgently require.

3. *The Imperial Future.*

The state of mind of the people in relation to Imperial problems is somewhat different. Here

there is not bias nor dislike, but lack of understanding and indifference. But how can the old disposition to take the Empire, its existence and its permanence in its present constitution, for granted any longer be sustained? We are living in a world of mighty change, a world in which new ideas, aspirations, and, indeed, very clear determinations are astir. To expect that, under such circumstances, a variegated and loosely knit partnership like that of the British Empire could remain unaffected would be ridiculous. Yet recognition that a stage has been reached when Imperial relationships will have to be reconsidered in the light of entirely new and fundamentally altered conditions comes mainly from the Dominions. Above all other issues, and crucial because every other issue turns upon it, is the new status of authority that came to the Dominions by their individual signature of the Peace Treaty and the new spirit of independence that it has created in them. It was an act of fundamental significance which only a few thousands of people in the United Kingdom yet realize. But it removed the last vestige of any sort of subservience on the part of the Dominions to the Mother Country, and it rendered impossible any further commitments by Great Britain which would involve the Dominions without their consent. These young nations which made peace separately may quite conceivably on subsequent occasions make war separately or withhold participation in wars made by the Mother Country.

As Lord Milner, our greatest Colonial Minister of recent years, said to the writer just before he left office, now, when all who do think are recognizing

that the Empire can survive as a political entity only on the basis of partnership, the whole problem of the future is how the partnership can be made workable. Though common interests are readily admitted, though there is an emphatic opinion in the Dominions that they must be allowed to express their views on the large questions of Imperial policy and development, no sooner does anyone attempt to put forth any kind of proposal for organizing their co-operation on a workable basis than there is raised an outcry about endangering the independence of the Dominions; and as a result of the uproar nothing is done.

Clearly, then, in the new organization for the government of the Empire the proposals must come from the Dominions. Not only is it they who are showing the greatest concern about the future, but it is they also who are more vitally affected by any decisions which may be made as to ways and means of securing co-operation in Imperial administration, with a recognition that the Dominions, like the Mother Country, are now nations, that they have individual characteristics, and their own internal and external problems. They will have to propose how they can maintain that security and high position in the world which has come to them through membership of the Empire, while yet remaining units of it.

One can plainly tell what follows. People must be awakened from their lethargy. We must cease to regard the Empire, if we still do so, as an Empire at all in the old sense of the term, and now we must envisage it as a Commonwealth. It means that we must prepare, all of us, to hammer out a basis

of relationship which will give us the two vital things of the future—unity in essential and collective needs, freedom in individual and domestic affairs.

There is nothing more likely to impress itself upon the mind of the practical man—the man who knows full well that our civilization lives by commerce—than the fact that the war has not only left all the six nations definitely the poorer, but has grievously damaged trade. Even if it were to be restored to-morrow, and supply and demand were suddenly increased to the normal, it would still require many years to win back the wealth that we have lost; whereas there are at the present time no reasonable hopes of an early return to the everyday channels of trade.

We should, all of us, face the fact that, being members of one family, we must increase our sadly depleted wealth by an intensive development of the almost illimitable natural resources that, in varying degree and kind, the family of nations possesses. For example, the United Kingdom imported in 1919 raw materials and articles mainly unmanufactured of the total value of £645,450,000. Of that amount considerably more than half—£343,880,000—were consigned from foreign countries, and only £303,119,000 from the Dominions. Figures of British exports are even more remarkable. In the same year the United Kingdom exported articles wholly or mainly manufactured to the total value of £631,643,000, of which only £178,737,000 went to British possessions and £453,216,000 to foreign countries.

No sane man now advocates the conversion of the Commonwealth by high tariffs into a close com-

mercial corporation. There is even evidence of weakening support for preference in the nations overseas. But, given united will and united action, we could do a great deal more trade among ourselves to our obvious advantage.

There is a natural repugnance to people who are always talking about their mission. Far from imposing ourselves in this way, it is doubtful if the citizens of the Commonwealth realize collectively that they have one. Yet could anything be more patent? We possess one-quarter of the land surface of the globe, and though of our population of 400,000,000 souls only about one-eighth are white, those 54,000,000 exercise an enormous influence in the world—an influence altogether out of proportion to their number.

What, then, is our obligation? It is surely to set an example by maintenance among ourselves of mutual tolerance and respect—government by the widest consent, rather than by any resort to force; it is frankly to recognize that the earth is man's, and that while we may legitimately combine among ourselves to maintain our security and our prosperity, we may not deliberately hurt any others outside our orbit. But our greatest undertaking is so to comport ourselves that as a Commonwealth we are always aiding the preservation of the world's peace, that greatest need of a stricken and sorely tried humanity to which I have already referred. For seven years the forces of ignorance, inflamed passion, unreason and ill-reason have held sway. They have foiled the efforts of the serious, enlightened and liberal-minded minority. They have perpetuated old international evils, political and

economic; and they have created new ones. It is a direct consequence that England and the English people are to-day wandering in the valley of impoverishment, that there are so many idle factories, so many bare cupboards, so much domestic misery and distress.

The remedy will come only through those channels which are democratic and pacific, and the tearing away by an alert democracy of the shams and deceits of diplomacy.

CHAPTER VI

TENDENCIES

1. *The Great Unrest.*

WHAT is the central fact that emerges from this survey of contemporary England? It is surely the universal and fundamental unrest that afflicts, quite impartially, every class, the uncertainty and discontent which colours life and makes it so unsatisfying. There could at this moment be no folly greater than deliberately to underrate, to discount, or to refuse to face the gravity of the general disturbance. There is, for example, manifest in all classes a fondness for extravagance and pleasure, a lack of care for moral issues, little trouble about such problems as those presented by starving Russia and Austria. About half the people vote at by-elections. There is a formidable development of the ego, a slackening of discipline, an indifference to consequences. The divorce courts teem with outraged wives and wronged husbands; a man whose acquaintance with firearms dates only from the war discovers his lover's infidelity and at once, as a natural course, shoots the rival; what appears to be an extraordinary number of parents are summoned for cruelly beating their children; the spread of bad and frequently revolting language is astonishing. All these manifestations imply a

slackening of the moral code and a coarsening of the mind which make excessively foolish and stupid the famous clergymen who almost hailed the war as an agency for the uplifting of mankind.

Intellects are enfeebled; the passion for truth and horror of injustice, and concern for one's character and reputation, are dulled. Nor do the spectacular demonstrations of this reaction, numerous as they are, truly indicate the amount of correction that will be necessary before the nation is restored even to its pre-war condition of regular living and the repression of animal instinct. For we have to face the immediate future bereft of what amounted to an entire generation of the young. It was wiped out in battle; "old men make wars, and young men die in them." About 11 per cent. of the privates who were mobilized never returned; among the officers the proportion was about 22 per cent.; and among the young subalterns the harvest of death was even greater still. Thus did the war wipe out regiments of young idealists who had enjoyed something of the new enlightenment that has lately been given in the schools, They were of the stock of men with high desires that come from fresh brains, and who have the energy to apply them, the elements that count for most in the world's affairs. It is no mere coincidence that our almost intolerable weight of social, industrial and economic problems follows upon the sudden abstraction from and the very partial restoration to the life of the nation of its noblest, bravest and most unselfish youth. Not they alone, but the nation also, pays the penalty of its misrulers. "Give us the young," cried Benjamin Kidd in *The Science of Power*, "and we will

build a new heaven and a new earth in a single generation." So are the reformers thwarted and the idealists robbed of their human material.

Further than that, the past few years have seen the emergence and emancipation of the nation's women. The war at once opened up to them careers and opportunities which have never been theirs before. If it compelled an enormous number to become self-supporting, it at least provided avenues for their energies. They had a great deal of money to spend; they enjoyed a new freedom, and made the utmost use of the novelty of finding themselves on an equality with men. They won the franchise, and millions began to cast their influence in local and national governments. The extent of their fitness to vote is a matter of keen controversy. In one or two cases unorthodox candidates such as those standing for "anti-waste" probably owe their return to the strength of the female vote, but the average working woman is decidedly not politically conscious. A few are effectively equipped for their responsibilities as citizens, but the very large majority are undoubtedly less fit for them than the inadequately equipped man. They may have been shaken from their lethargy, they may be awakening, and they may be less satisfied with their lot, but in character and intellect there is nothing to show that they have advanced in the least degree since 1914. But this deduction is true equally of a considerable proportion of women in more comfortable circumstances who are not compelled to earn their own living. Here again one may find changed views, unrest, discontent, vague criticisms of many things that are adversely affect-

ing their lives, but a much more desperate concern about getting a husband or appearing well dressed.

The conclusion must therefore be that power has been extended to a great number of women whose qualification is simply one of democracy, and not at all one of fitness to exercise it. They are in general probably less fit to vote than the men because they have given even less than the scanty attention that men have given to great national issues and because they are demonstrably more easily swayed by prejudice and novelty. Considerations not less serious are aroused by the mere fact of their preponderance. Professor Patrick Geddes estimates it at nearly two millions, and at the same time reminds us that a civilization is high or low according as women are at a premium or a discount. What is the outlook for this surplus? The war thwarted their natural function of marriage and reproduction; avenues of employment to which they were eagerly beckoned during it are now closed to them, and vast numbers find that, dependent as they are upon their own exertions, there is no use for their frequently untrained or, conversely, their narrowly specialized services. This, at a moment when large numbers of men are convinced that, with falling wages and high prices, they cannot marry, is the most serious menace to morals that one could imagine. Until some solution is found, or until the balance is righted, it will necessarily continue to encourage promiscuity, with its deadening influence upon the human mind and its check upon any approach to higher motives of personal betterment or the common good.

But it is the impetus of economic changes that

produces in our society the clearest, most definite, and most serious factor in the universal dislocation of our time. The war gave everybody but those few who declined, even in war, to cease thinking an extraordinarily false notion about the nation's wealth. All the industries were working at highest pressure ; there was an enormous amount of money in circulation ; wages were high, profits were high ; and the Government spent with a recklessness that would in calmer days have speedily compassed their downfall. Thus men and women gained the impression that we were making money when, as a fact, we were dissipating it in non-productive channels, financing destruction, and pledging our credit to foreign lenders. For the four years of war and two years after it this illusion of national opulence governed our material outlook entirely. With the rise in the rate of interest, the decline in the purchasing power of money, and the diminished productivity of essential things, it set up, on the one hand, a demand for increased profits and, on the other hand, intensified the ambition of the worker for a higher general standard of living—that is, not only a larger share of the diminished product of his labour, but a larger absolute amount drawn from the diminished total. It was impossible to convince workers who had already been awakened to the desirable uses of money, and who were determined that they should, in return for their labour, have a fair share of it, that money was not available, when the war contractor and the ship-owner and the wool lord indulged in such an orgy of spending as that which I have already described.

What we have got to-day, however, is the natural

and inevitable reaction from profligate spending out of capital, reduced output and lost markets. The worker, with his new consciousness, is demanding an average standard of life definitely higher than that which existed before the war ; the answer is a general reduction of wages. He demands a decent commodious house, where he may bring up his family without hurt to its health and morals, and the experts—not mere reforming enthusiasts, but staid permanent officials—tell us that adequately to provide for the nation's needs half a million dwellings are required ; the worker is told that only a third of that number can be provided, and that if he is not one of the lucky applicants he must be content with his slum. What answer will the worker return to the curt rejection of his legitimate desires, remembering that he is probably being thwarted by " the hard-faced men who appear to have done well out of the war," and who themselves have probably two or three desirable residences ? So far he has taken the checking of his aspirations with amazing acquiescence. There has been nothing in the industrial history of England equal to the docility with which the workers, betraying in some respects such profound dissatisfaction at their lot, have accepted the general cutting-down of their standard of life which has proceeded since the summer of 1921. The miners alone, with rare tenacity and with perfect order and discipline, fought the issue. They were beaten by those inexorable circumstances which other sections of the industrial community realized and feared to challenge. But, having for the present escaped disorder, is this in itself any guarantee that we shall, under given circumstances,

do so again? May we take it that with so much explosive human material in the country, with so many factors that may cause an ignition, our society is secure from violent upheaval?

2. *The Call to Austerity.*

Despite much that may appear to silence doubt and to quell fear, no human being could return an affirmative answer to these prepositions. It is because that is true, because we can never gauge with complete accuracy the working of the mass mind, that it seems, if we are wise, we shall seek for means of prevention. There is a minimum level of subsistence below which no man or woman, worker or middle class, should be thrust. It is the standard which existed in 1914, then inadequate for the needs of the people, and to-day quite out of keeping with their newer consciousness. Granted that it is necessary now, and for some years to come, that the nation must recognize poverty as the main legacy of the war, granted that it is necessary for us to accept restriction of our scale of living, it seems more than ever necessary for us to accept the principle of equality of sacrifice. What wealth the country has, what wealth it is going to produce, must be distributed on altogether different lines. This implies not merely that all incomes must be reduced in equal proportions, but that those who have most must give up most, and that mere riotous and reckless expenditure must go before the artisan, the labourer or the suburban is asked further to yield up the demand

he makes for a decent level of existence. "Money," said Francis Bacon in his essay *Of Seditions and Troubles*, "is like muck: not good unless it be spread." The new temper of the people seems clearly to indicate that there must be a very great modification of the rights and privileges of capital. Leaders of industry must reconcile themselves to the fact that the day for amassing immense fortunes, especially where there is little or no social return for it, is definitely drawing to a close. The will and the power to levy such a toll upon the community, and the desire vulgarly to display such excessive wealth, cannot much longer survive the new social atmosphere that has been created. Capitalist society is about to undergo the greatest test in its history. On its results, the people, whether they are adequately or inadequately equipped, challenge that order, and it is no doubt mainly a question of choice whether we radically modify it, whether we part from the glaring inequalities of the past by consent, whether employers learn to find satisfaction in the prospect of more contented, more loyal, more prosperous workers, or whether the old order is to go by more summary means.

The acquisitive motive, it is true, is not yet dead. It plays, indeed, a profoundly important part in life; and it is not wholly bad, for it has been the main spur which has made us the great commercial nation that we are. But it is like nearly everything else, it requires control—control not only by legal enactment, but in modern society by self-discipline. Mr. R. H. Tawney, in *The Acquisitive Society*, shows with great power and conviction

how, as an obsession, it produces the very ills with which society to-day is stricken, and that only if it is imbued with the spirit of sacrifice and mutual service can society be cured.

This testing time may be a matter of only a very few years. Nobody can yet tell how long it will be before the economic chaos prevailing in Europe is wiped out and the machinery of production and exchange is restored. It may be five years, it may be fifty years, but appearances seem to favour a comparatively early recovery, for the simple truth is that we have substantially solved the problem of poverty. The modern capacity for the production of goods and the performance of services is so great that sufficiency for everyone ought never to be in doubt. Nor, in normal conditions, would it be if our productive capacity were organized for the use and service of the community, if the distribution of our wealth were not so ill-balanced, if there were not a very small class enormously wealthy, and the great machine that man has evolved were not bent firstly to the manufacture of exclusive luxuries for the satisfaction of those who own it, and secondly to providing the needs of those whose duty it is merely to work it.

"We have won through the horrors of the birth and establishment of the factory system at the cost of physical deterioration," says Sir Leo Chiozza Money. "We have purchased a great commerce at the price of crowding our population into the cities and of robbing millions of strength and beauty. We have given our people what we grimly call elementary education, and robbed them of the elements of a natural life. All this has been done that a

few of us may enjoy a superfluity of goods and services." [1]

The main fact about our capacity to produce is that within the memory of many living men England has almost doubled her population, and by ingenuity, industry and enterprise has evolved such a complicated system that she can bring forth a volume of wealth such as, half a century ago, would have been deemed impossible. In less than a hundred years human skill has reduced the Malthusian theory to stupidity. This fact, and a wider recognition of interdependence which compels the bartering of our coal and manufactures for the raw materials of the agrarian countries abroad, might restore prosperity to these shores in the course of a decade. Our progress hitherto has been the result first of some discovery, then of another, but each one assisting us to make goods more quickly or to circulate them more speedily. The stress of the war brought forth a great variety of inventions which revolutionized certain channels of production. Is there any warrant for assuming that such discovery has ceased? Is it not much more probable that the coming years will mark changes as great as those of the past which to-day are commonplace and to-morrow will be effete? Modern civilization is built upon power, upon our discovery how to use coal and oil, and the driving force of water in the generation of electric energy. Suppose a bright and diligent research-scientist stumbled one day upon the discovery of how to unlock the prodigious storehouse of atomic energy. "The energy which we require for our very existence and which Nature

[1] *Riches and Poverty*, p. 338, popular edition.

supplies us with but grudgingly and in none too generous measure for our needs," says Professor Soddy,[1] "is in reality locked up in immense stores in the matter all around us, but the power to control and use it is not yet ours. . . . When we have learned how to transmute the elements at will the one into the other, then, and not till then, will the key to this hidden treasure-house be in our hands. At present we have no hint of how even to begin the quest."

But there is nothing fantastic or impossible about the supposition of the discovery. The awakening of this giant which now sleeps may come overnight, and we may arise one morning to find a single man endowed with the knowledge how literally to destroy our civilization or to transform it. The romantic literature of Mr. H. G. Wells would be cast upon the dust-heap, for we should have as the actual what the writers of twenty years ago conceived as the fantastic. But there can be no immediate profit in speculating what would happen under such conditions. There is interest in the matter because it is simply one cogent example of the great opportunities that still await a world already so marvellously equipped to satisfy the needs of its people, because it demonstrates how brief may be the period of our national poverty and our need for frugality, because it shows that mankind is likely to become not less but more the slave of machinery, whether it be the slave who operates it or the slave who owns it, draws his toll upon its product, and lives only by new luxuries and unheard-of frenzies which it brings forth.

[1] *The Interpretation of Radium.*

Already life is beset by intensity, by complexity, by the bitterness which over-satisfied and under-satisfied wants produce, by the awakening of mass ambition, by the opening of the windows of the mind, by on the one hand vice and license and on the other hand close concentration on high and elevating purposes. Our inventors, our thinkers, our moralists, our appellants to the wisdom of the ancients, all continue the pursuit of their purpose, and England herself drifts to a fate which can be to us little more than speculation and conjecture.

3. *The Uncharted Future.*

What, then, does it seem that this storm-tossed and feverish present is going to make of the dark and uncharted future? Can we, from the evidences that are about us, from the tendencies that seem to be at work shaping the England of to-day and to-morrow—can we acquire the consciousness of direction that is the indispensable condition of freedom and salvation? Great risks are run in generalizations upon a topic so vast and so varied, but it is at least clear enough that certain changes are now in process which must carry us to a state better or worse than the one we now know. These changes are so fundamental, they go so deeply to the roots of our social system, that their very operation spells a new England at no very distant time. And we shall not get that, whether it be good or bad, without at least as much unsettlement and unrest as now encompass us. Nearly everything that has happened in the past few years, and

indeed is still in process of deciding our future, contributes to a sense of instability and apprehension. There has been the admission of an enormous number of people to the franchise. The Reform Act of 1918 almost doubled the electorate, and handed to young men of twenty-one and women of thirty their share in the government of the country. This new voting power has not yet been put to an adequate test. In the khaki election which marked the end of the war large numbers of those who were for the time admitted to political power were serving with the forces overseas, and no amount of organization could provide opportunities, even for those who did vote, of understanding and judging upon the policies of rival candidates. Similarly, those at home were captivated by the magnetic appeal of Mr. Lloyd George as " the man who won the war " to give him a mandate for the winning of the peace, and it was thus very much a vote for a man rather than a serious and considered vote for a policy. What decisions will follow on the changes which have occurred since the pantomime of Versailles, and which are now being consciously felt by nearly every voter in the country ; what they will have to say, when the next appeal comes, to the Coalition, to Liberalism and to Labour, it is obviously impossible to determine. Nor is it the issue. It is the fact of the accession to citizenship of eight million more men and women, the vast majority of the working people, not more than one-fourth of whom are, according to their professed friends, fitted for the responsibility, and two-thirds or three-quarters of whom are definitely inadequately equipped, that raises doubts about the decisions which these new

citizens will make. Where we have any evidence of its results, it has produced in many cases actual control by elected Labour representatives of great bodies concerned with local government like the county, city and borough councils, and of Poor Law Unions with their immense powers of assessment. Everything that is now occurring to the electorate, however, increases the lack of ability to judge it.

Again, other changes that are happening are no less far-reaching, and are more determinate. By various processes democracy, now accepted in politics, is being carried into industry. To the demand of the workers that they should become at least participants in the direction of the great productive machine, employers in increasing numbers are yielding. By the Coal Mines Act of 1920 great powers are assigned to the Miners' Federation ; by the agreement of 1921 between the Government, the companies and the men's organizations, the railway workers will henceforth take a prominent part in the management and direction of that great service ; and in nearly every trade a few employers are more or less willingly applying co-partnership and profit-sharing to their enterprises. But more fundamental and decisive changes are occurring in those cases where the people themselves are assuming absolute ownership and control. One instance is the co-operative movement, which extends its enormous resources not merely over the countryside, but which is rapidly becoming the dominant factor in the supply of their general needs to the people. With its four million members, its turnover in many scores of millions, its land, ships, factories

and distributive stores, representing a capital of £100,000,000 and finding employment for nearly 200,000 of its members, voluntary co-operation in England is going down to the economic foundations, and on the basis of its extension during the past five years it will, in 1931, have enrolled the head of every household in the country.

Closely allied to co-operation, as an illustration of the turnover in economic power, is the progress which is being made by the Building Guilds, for they are in most cases obtaining what raw material they can through co-operative sources. The fact that these Guilds of working men, guided by their trade union officials and sympathetic experts, are able by commercial practice to build houses as well as the contractors, much more cheaply, and yet pay standard wages, with a surplus for bad times, sickness and unemployment, has fastened itself upon the minds of large numbers of the workers in other trades, and is likely to become an increasingly important factor in the future development of industry.

And with all this transfer of power from the master to the man there is also in process, or will speedily be manifested, a new orientation of economic status. At the present moment a road-sweeper employed by a Metropolitan borough gets as much as some of the provincial school teachers. A machineman in a daily newspaper office frequently earns as much in one week as a University professor; there were throughout the war ship repairers who went home at the week-end with £40 and £50, the remuneration of a member of the Government. Not, however, so much what has already been done

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in the wider diffusion of wealth as the very clear and emphatic demand which the workers and the black-coated army are making for greater reward, and which will be pressed with all its force when the nation is once again on its feet, is the important problem upon which so much depends. What any intelligent and impartial observer has already seen of the spending instincts of very large numbers of working men and women will inspire him with very little confidence that the majority are yet completely to be trusted to use increased wealth wisely and well. Great numbers are. Great numbers will use it to keep their children longer at school, to provide extended holidays at the sea, to buy books, to gratify their taste for good plays, to obtain more and better clothing; but a greater number will, if we may judge from the past, probably use their money in similar fashion, but on a smaller scale, to those who now live simply the life of reckless gaiety. They will drink more beer, lay more money on a horse, go more frequently to the cinema, or engage in greater and more expensive *amours*.

All these things, of course, illustrate the folly, and the stupidity, of confident prophecy. No man who realizes the enormity of what is now happening, and who knows the fallibility of the human mind, would dare dogmatically to say what the future, immediate or remote, holds for England. Certain modern philosophers like the Dean of St. Paul's, who naturally measure the present and the future by the past, meet optimism with gloom, and deride Pliny's conviction that each age is better than the last. "The Cro-Magnon race which lived perhaps twenty thousand years ago," says Dean

Inge,[1] "were at least equal to any modern people in size and strength; the ancient Greeks were, I suppose, handsomer and better formed than we are. . . . Mentally, we are now told, the men of the Old Stone Age, ugly as most of them must have been, had as large brains as ours; and he would be a bold man who should claim that we are intellectually equal to the Athenians, or superior to the Romans." The very fact that in this present century, with all the accumulated wisdom and discovery of the ages, we should be engaging in such a holocaust as the Great War, with its hatreds, its cruelties, its brutalities, and that these baser qualities, stifling impulse to what is noble or elevating, should have so easily captured the minds of all classes, may well give us deep concern. If we look squarely and impartially upon England and the world to-day, we shall at once admit the essential imperfectability of the human mind, and it will qualify our optimism.

4. *Supports of Security.*

Yet some of the very factors that induce doubt, when examined, should, paradoxically as it may seem, rather reassure us. The most striking deduction to draw from the events of the past ten years is not that from them has emerged the England that is, but that amid so much change, so much disturbance and so much novelty has survived a great deal of the England that was. All that has happened has produced no great fundamental spectacular change in our customs and habits. The

[1] *The Idea of Progress*, Romanes Lecture for 1920.

average Englishman, who has not been subjected to some great calamity like the loss of limbs, or who has not stumbled upon some great good fortune like the reward of the profiteer, goes about his business pretty well as he did in July 1914. He works or idles, as the case may be, drinks, sleeps, goes to the cinema or the football match, or the theatre, or the tennis court or the polo ground. He lives in the same sort of house and, but for a very modified change in fashion, wears the same sort of clothes. Frederic Villiers, in his reminiscences, tells us how, even in the first few days after the fall of the Commune, Parisians were going about their business as if nothing had happened. So they are doing in England to-day. Outwardly there is no sign of the revolution that has been, and still is, in process.

Therein we may see revealed a good deal of the national character, our conservatism, our leisurely processes, our tenacious belief in order, our distrust of noise and fuss and extravagant conduct, our astonishing capacity for gradually accepting and assimilating change without any accompanying drama of upheaval. That is why outwardly there is so little manifestation of opened minds and altered circumstances. The English working man, who has become an effective citizen and is in revolt against his lot, does not go and burn down the home of his employer; though he may profoundly believe in the need of joint workshop management, he does not, like the Italian workers did in 1920, seize the factories and turn out his boss. We can have the spectacle of millions of unemployed workers existing on a miserable dole, a great number of them among

the least thoughtful and probably the least worthy members of the community, bearing their lot amid reckless demonstrations of plenty with hardly a single ugly outburst of temper and feeling. In the same way thousands of men and women, formerly comfortably off, have found their incomes shrink to zero, have sold their homes, their small lands, their family treasures, and have settled down to simple life in a cottage or a London flat or boarding-house practically without complaint and without any more serious action than the organization of the Middle Classes Union.

Emerson, writing at least seventy years ago, in his essay on *Manners*, said: "I happened to arrive in England at the moment of a commercial crisis. But it is evident that let who will fail, England will not. These people have sat here a thousand years, and here will continue to sit. They will not break up, or arrive at any desperate revolution, like their neighbours; for they have as much energy, as much continence of character, as ever they had." One might not be quite so definite to-day, but Emerson's description is still not far from the mark.

This well-established characteristic—to take change warily and quietly—is perhaps the most important and hopeful tendency among the many others that are at work influencing and moulding our national future, because it should, and one may reasonably believe it will, govern all those others which seem far less certain, substantial and encouraging.

The principal insurance of our social security is our faith and belief in the concrete, in those things of substance and reality which govern our very

existence, and a life without which very few men and women can imagine. It is the leaders of opinion with staying power like Mr. Arthur Henderson and Mr. Asquith, rather than such meteors as Mr. Victor Grayson and Mr. Tom Mann, who persist. It is those institutions, like trades unionism and co-operation, built up gradually, but now playing such a vital part in the intimate lives of the people, rather than the novel doctrines of Syndicalism and Communism, that are accepted and grow from strength to strength. Co-operation, which has persisted for eighty years, which has attained its giant status solely through the guiding control of the workers themselves, now plays so vital a part in the regular life of the community that it constitutes an economic rock, impregnable against the assaults of amateur revolutionaries. It is because we have developed so strongly this faith in realities, because our very institutions count for so much, and because, whatever the depth of economic suffering that may have been involved and however flaunting the material wealth of the few, there has been no actual physical repression of discontent and ambition, that, so far as the mass is concerned, we have in England to-day no indication of a class war. However much criticism there may be of a social system which produces those immense inequalities—Kensington Palace Gardens and Bethnal Green, or Edgbaston and Aston—there is very little hatred of individuals and no indication of physical uprising, because there is not, on the part of the possessors, that measure of cruelty, despotism and contempt which produced the French Revolution and a century later brought down the Russian Throne. All except-

ing a very few people are engaged in other affairs totally removed from hatred and plot-hatching, which does so little more than amuse them. They are either searching for diversion and pleasure, or they are earnestly endeavouring by constitutional and thoroughly regular means to secure that command of power which will enable them, through elected representatives, to remove the causes of disparity by changing, in orderly fashion, the economic structure.

These, then, are some of the dominant signs of the times, regulated, modified, supported, or discredited by our national temper. We get after several years of acute disturbance, when the very foundations of the universe appear to have been soundly shaken, and when it almost seems that nothing which might happen to submerge our civilization could occasion surprise—we get, still well marked, evidences of discontent, but also the clearest evidences of stability. How the working of our amazing system, our want of system, our traditional capacity for muddling through victoriously, strikes a foreigner is told with a wealth of detail by Edouard Bernstein, the German Socialist leader.[1] The anarchy of England persists where the order and regimentation of Germany fails. And he would be a fatalist indeed who declined to see in this phenomenon some amount of encouragement for England.

[1] *My Years of Exile.* (Leonard Parsons, Ltd.)

CHAPTER VII

FOUNDATIONS OF RELEASE

1. *Knowledge with Power.*

It will not, however, appeal to men of good sense that amid the great changes that are now ensuing, we should be too sure of our capacity for "muddling through." Since our greatest successes in emerging from periods of tension very much has happened, and as I show in the last chapter, still more is in process of happening. The destinies of England have passed into the control of the people, who have political power almost as complete as they could possibly enjoy it. The women under thirty only excepted, England to-day has universal suffrage. What is of not less but probably much greater importance, these people have the liberty to use it, free from intimidation or coercion, and they are rapidly becoming conscious of its effective strength. This, together with the growing command of the people over industry and the prospects of their accession to greater material reward, involves, in its cumulative effect, a bigger, more sudden, and more portentous step than anything that has occurred in this country since the Reformation. The great events which produced modern England, for example, occurred in gradual

and leisurely stages. The Revolution which turned us from an agrarian to an industrial community commenced in the second half of the eighteenth century, but it was not until forty years later that the very moderate Reform Bill of 1832 was passed, and a further forty years had to elapse before trades unionism became in the slightest degree effective. But in the new atmosphere which the war has done so much to hasten, the machinery of democracy is being established in much less than a decade.

Presumably, democracy is being established because we have faith in it, because we think it is the most equitable, the fairest, the best form of government. It is a surprising and somewhat alarming thing that so very few people should pause to ask whether democracy is fitted for the task that is being placed upon it. We appear to-day to be obsessed with those epigrammatic philosophies of the Victorian age, namely, simple assertion of the rights of the people. "Self-government is better than good government," said John Stuart Mill. "It is better for a man to go wrong in freedom than to go right in chains," declared Huxley. Yet no great thinker, from the ancient Greeks down to the most modern times, has said the slightest thing to encourage a blind faith in the capacity or the disposition of the people, once they have assumed power, to use it wisely and well. They have all rather taught the contrary—that democracy, if it is to be successful, must be adequately equipped with knowledge, understanding and moral elevation; in short, that it must be democracy and not mere irresponsible rabble. This

seems to be the great fact which we are to-day in danger of forgetting. To set up the machinery of democracy, leaving the people untrained and uneducated in their responsibilities, is to hazard a new state which may be infinitely worse than anything that has gone before—which may even produce disintegration and finally chaos. In any case it would effectively prevent our attaining the best in the new political society.

It is one of the very definite and hopeful results of the war that among large numbers of men and women there is arising a new passion for education. The effective workers had already awakened to the social advantages of spacious knowledge. They were aroused mainly by the preparatory instruction of the classroom, and encouraged by such agencies as newspapers, magazines, books, cinemas, theatres, labour meetings, trade union activities, clubs, and, for the few, adult schools, tutorial classes and study circles. It created not merely material discontent but also the desire and the will to go more deeply into the pages of knowledge and understanding. It was attachment to education and learning for its own sake, but it was also a stretching out to a means whereby they would be released from those chains of ignorance which held them down and prevented any sort of communion with the cultured and enlightened men of the time. I recollect once telling a miner friend, an excellent young man who strove painfully after knowledge, about a pleasant holiday I had been spending in the company of one or two distinguished people. " Yes," he said, " that is just where I fail. I work hard and I have the money to enjoy such a holi-

day, but I couldn't go to a place like that; they would find me out at once." It was in vain that I urged upon him that very few cultured men are snobs. "It is not they who would be ill at ease in such circumstances," he insisted; "it is I myself who would be conscious of the gulf." To remove that gulf is now the settled determination of a large proportion of the manual workers. They demand equality of educational opportunity, and until they can get it they are taking every available step efficiently to equip themselves. Wales and Scotland, perhaps more notably than England, are the seats of this new renaissance. More than 80 per cent. of the students in the University of Wales are the children of workers who have given to them encouragement in their pursuits, and have sustained them in their tasks. According to Professor Stephens,[1] tutor of a psychology class, "the deep interest which is taken in the subject has been an agreeable surprise to me. I have become convinced that the South Wales miners (the members are almost exclusively anthracite miners) have a peculiar gift for this branch of learning."

Not only for those who are demanding education, however, but for the entire population, is the need of educational opportunity now one of the most pressing issues. But what kind of education? There are many workers themselves, as well as many legislators and leaders of opinion, who point to what they regard as the expensive

[1] In the Annual Report, Welsh District Workers' Educational Association, 1919.

efficiency of the elementary and secondary schools, contrast it with the lack of almost any educational facilities before the Act of 1870, and ask what on earth we could want more! The truth is that the mere teaching of a child to read, to write, to do a few sums, and a bit of handicraft, the fact that the Conqueror came over in 1066, that Henry VIII had six wives, and that there are five Continents, is no more than laying the barest foundations of what ought to be a wide apprehension of the facts and problems and possibilities of life, its splendours as well as its pains, its limitless possibilities as well as its burdens. We want to teach men and women to live well, to work well, to apprehend intelligently what has already happened in the world, what is now happening around them. Mr. Fisher's Act, despite its progressive whittling down, which is leaving only the dry bones of the measure as it originally stood, is useful because it further admits the plain call of so many of the people, and the unconscious need of those who do not call. But neither at fourteen nor sixteen, nor yet at eighteen, should a youth or a girl be told that the period of their education is finished; that there is nothing more they need trouble to learn. For, of course, it is not true. What we should rather say to them is that they are then just beginning to learn, and that the world is simply for them a huge classroom, where they may constantly be adding to their understanding; and it is for the Government, as a Labour Government surely will do when it comes into power, to express this principle in a definite policy. Education for every single boy and girl should be compulsory until he or

she is at least sixteen, and the curriculum should be a liberal one, not merely vocational, teaching them greater skill in the earning of their living (in many cases that will probably be desirable and necessary), but teaching them also more of the facts of life in its widest and most varied aspects.

For the many, as for the few, there is only one type of education that we should offer them. That type is the best, and the best in England to-day is the education of the Universities. Let everyone have the opportunities which the Universities provide. Many more people could go to the Universities, but manifestly all could not go, not even all who would like to; however, as Lord Haldane and Sir Henry Jones, of Glasgow University, have pointed out, in taking the Universities to the people by a wide and generous extension of the tutorial principle, much is being done. Let the scheme be such that in whatever centre there were men and women who wanted it, there should be provided classes in the arts and the sciences where men and women of skill, sympathy and understanding would radiate the atmosphere of those great seats of learning which in the past has been the privilege of the few.

This, however, does not rule out the present possibilities of individual effort already open to those who will take them. Young men who are enjoying a higher standard of life, who are working fewer hours, like the miners, and who are securing a new status in our economic system, have the means, if they have the will, adequately to fit themselves for the new intellectual progress that

the time demands, and to do much to equip their children for the still greater tasks ahead. I heard some time ago of a miner who so educated his son that he is now an assistant master in one of our great public schools. The day is probably coming when such incidents which now call for interest and comment will be common enough, but it is in the spirit of that miner, indicated in the effort he made for his son, not less than anything that the Government may do, that democracy will ultimately justify the claims of its exponents and its leaders.

We are not, I think, to anticipate within a few years a condition pictured so vividly by Robert Blatchford and William Morris, in which every stone-breaker read Virgil over his bread-and-cheese by the wayside, and every miner devoured the words of Ruskin and Matthew Arnold in his spare half-hour down the pit. But we are, I think, to look forward to a time when every normal man and woman in the country will be in possession of such a degree of knowledge that they are able intelligently to understand and to use those vast opportunities that are coming to them, and when the minority who everywhere and in all time have been the "uncontented characters," the leaders of thought and action and progress, who are chosen by democracy as its leaders, are at least as well equipped for their task as those who hitherto have led the world. That day will see the obliteration of class, and the end of a long era in which a very few wealthy men and women have imposed themselves and their superiority, by virtue of knowledge and culture, over the workers. It will

be the first approach that the world has yet made to genuine equality, for such equality is not based on material possession; it is based on the measure of opportunity to learn, to know, and to act, that is placed at the disposal of every human being, upon which alone contentment and safety in the new time that is developing can rest.

2. *Wanted, a New Fidelity.*

But neither the acquisition of power nor the discipline of knowledge can dispose completely of the problem of the present and the future. It is true that the awakening and opening of the intellect and its cultivation will go a very great way. An educated man has usually a higher sense of responsibility, obligation and duty. He sees facts more clearly and in the right perspective. He can reason more surely, and the prospect is that he will be an altogether superior type of citizen. Yet education will not definitely ensure that.

History, from its earliest records, assures us otherwise. It tells us what the events of the past few years have so amply demonstrated—that men and women of ability and learning can be, and often are, as anti-social, as cruel, as wicked, as [illegible]ed as the mediocre and the ignorant.

Education did not, for instance, restrain Germany from conducting the war in a fashion upon which neither Attila nor Alexander could have improved. It did not prevent the sinking of the *Lusitania.* Similarly, the courts are being occupied day after

day by cases in which clever men are revealed as wife and child-beaters, fraudulent vendors and betrayers of trust. Men and women of culture are also included among the gamblers, drink victims, liars and dissemblers. Unwittingly, indeed, we might very easily give to a man the means of acquiring knowledge that would end our civilization.

When I asked a young friend, a distinguished research chemist, what he would do if he discovered how to release atomic energy, he replied at once: "I should not communicate it. I think I might write it down, and bury it somewhere, but I would not tell the world, because the world is not yet fit to know." Apart altogether from the matter of any new discovery, there is already general recognition that the science of war has been so far developed, its long-range guns, its poison gases, and its command of the air so perfected, that another great conflict waged on the scale of the last will wipe out existence as we know it to-day and will compel the remnants of the people who escape to revert to the primitive.

Yet there are men who, knowing it all, profess to see no escape; and there are others who, still knowing it, are content, apparently, slowly to approach ultimate certain destruction. We may proceed to bring forth new Pasteurs, with their authoritative command over virulent disease; we may produce a new Madame Curie who will present to us fresh wonders in the realm of scientific power; we may even learn from some amazing brain of the future how to attain the allotted span

of three hundred years which Mr. Bernard Shaw tells us is within the range of mankind. But all the training, all the effort, and all the vast new promise of life will be as nought if we cannot learn to live peaceably with the rest of the world.

All of which is conviction that the new England, the better England which is undoubtedly the call of large numbers of men and women, involves not only with the new orientation of power a new education but also a new mind. The vital question is how far we can get a new fidelity among human beings that will submerge the ego in the recognition of society, and establish mutual obligation as the rule of individual and collective life. The spirit of the time seems to suggest that this is our great need, and that indeed we can do with little less. The very basis of our society is involved. It is because that basis is so largely acquisitive, individualistic, and hedonic that we are beset by those manifestations which raise our doubts and fears. The economic wrangle, constant struggle over the division of what one section of the community brings forth, strikes, lock-outs, and the whipping up of the workers to produce more, together with the very fact that men will do so many things that may indulge their own desires but are demonstrably harmful to others, are further examples of satisfaction in self and unconcern for everything else. He who lives extravagantly, or who is dishonest, cruel, mendacious, is simply the produce of a code which in practice has failed pitiably to meet the need of a civilized community, and the ceaseless searcher after mere pleasure, whether it be on a

yacht, on a grouse moor, or at the cinema or the street-corner, whose thoughts never soar beyond personal entertainment, is illustrative of the same truth.

If the nation really is content to go on living by such a pagan and anti-social rule of life, implying jealousies of class and country, a perpetuation of the age of struggle, contention, dispute, pleasure, drift, neither the accession of democracy nor its education can avail us very much. There will still be a future for England, but it will differ little from the England of to-day, and can hardly be better. A democracy concerned merely with material gain and the desire for possession would differ only in substance, and not at all in spirit, from a plutocracy motived by the same considerations, and would fail to justify the pretensions made for it.

If, therefore, we cannot submit ourselves to a new basis of society built upon the four cornerstones of service, co-operation, obligation and duty, it is quite probable that Dean Inge is right when he pours his cold analytical doubt upon man's enthusiasms, and tells us[1] that "we must cut down our hopes for our nation, for Europe and for humanity at large, to a very modest and humble aspiration."

But can we? There seem already to be cases where this new mind is being born, where, by culture, it is growing and declaring itself to the world. The very exhibition of increasing discontent with our competitive and covetous and selfish way of life, and the increasing desire of men and women

[1] *The Idea of Progress*, p. 34.

radically to change it by dethroning the instrument and the social environment that supports and sustains it, is surely indicative of our capacity to rise beyond the morass in which at present we flounder. Even the Dean of St. Paul's will admit that "if nature does not promise progress, neither does it forbid it." Every organization which seeks to repress self and to exalt the community and which, like co-operation, the trade unions, the Friendly Societies, and so on, is extending its strength over the masses of England, is keeping aflame a spirit which bids us to take heart. The very instrument which imposes such an acceleration of change and anxiety upon us, if it produced a return to primitive barbarities and passions, also produced so much evidence of innate capacity for sacrifice and adherence to sovereign conscience that the bad of the war is almost cancelled out by the good. That millions of men quietly inoffensive, by no means bellicose, were prepared, at the call of what seemed to them a solemn duty, to obey, leaving behind homes, families, employment and the certitude of life, is probably a greater lesson to be drawn from the war than any record of its moral damage. Alfred Russel Wallace asked us to make a similar deduction from the life of man in his surroundings when, after his smashing indictment of our social environment he wrote [1]: "To myself there seems only one explanation [of the goodness and humanity that persists in us]. . . . It is that the Divine nature in us—that portion of our higher nature which raises us above the brutes, and the influx of which makes us men—cannot be lost, cannot even be permanently deteri-

[1] *Social Environment and Moral Progress*, p. 116.

orated by conditions, however adverse, by craving however senseless and bad. It ever remains in us, the central portion of our human nature, ready to respond to every favourable opportunity that arises, to grasp and hold firm every fragment of high thought or noble action that has been brought to its notice, to oppose, even to the death, every falsehood in teaching, every tyranny in action."

The fact that man has it in him to improve is, I think, quite clearly established. That he has improved will be denied only by those who have fallen out of love with their humankind. And there is no more reason to doubt that he will continue to improve than there is reason to doubt that the age of mechanical invention has ended. The most searching and important question of the moment is whether there is any possibility of our evolving the new fidelity in face of the material changes which are occurring.

3. *Religion in Eclipse.*

The question, "How are we going to get this new fidelity?" is hardly within the scope of a book which professes to be mainly analytical. But as this is a description of facts, moods and needs, it does call for some reference to existing agencies which seek to influence men by uplifting them. Of these, the organized Churches are the outstanding examples. In the days before the war, it seemed that the Churches, and indeed all religious

agencies, were failing in their efforts to win the populace of England. People were not so much moved by doubt or disbelief as by the conviction that they had no use for the Churches. Vast numbers who never entered a place of devotion unless the occasion were a marriage or a death held on more or less vaguely to a belief in Heaven and Hell. On the one hand, it offered a prospect of rest and compensation for a life of hardship, toil and distress; and on the other hand, it presented a warning against sin which undoubtedly acted in many cases as a deterrent to wrong-doing. The denominations looked upon the indifference of the age with apprehension and sorrow, published statistics indicating the progressive decline in Church and Sunday-school membership, and forecasted, with the decline of their power and authority, the coming dissolution of society. With a few exceptions, the rich were almost wholly irreligious. Sundays were devoted to golfing, motoring, lunching and dining out to the accompaniment of jazz-bands, and just an occasional appearance at Sunday morning service (when some witty or famous man was to preach), prior to a walk in the Row. Almost everywhere the middle classes and the prosperous artisan was the mainstay of church and chapel, but then it was mainly the effort of the middle-aged and the elderly. Mr. Sidney Webb, in his *History of the Durham Miners,* admits that the remarkable influence of religious teaching among them is not so strongly present in the younger generation, and that that influence in itself is a quite exceptional manifestation. So in the mining valleys and the obscure villages of Wales, the

majority of the regular worshippers were and are the men and women of forty, fifty or sixty.

There were many explanations for this falling off in Church attachment. An authentic one was that Sunday, as the only day in the week which the multitude could call its own, was tending, amid the stress of the times, to become a day for recreation, for entertaining and enjoyment. No amount of insistence by the clergy and the ministers upon the duty of church-attendance would suffice to move these people from the preservation of Sunday for themselves. Another was that mainly they despised dogma, partly because they did not comprehend it, and partly because they were utterly unconvinced that affirmation of belief was essential either to enable them to do the right thing on earth, or as a condition of life hereafter. And yet with all this indifference and lack of concern for organized religion, the people were in no sense conspicuously worse; the quite astonishing thing is that if one judges fairly, taking all the cross-currents and apparent contradictions into account, they were better than they were, say, two generations ago, when not to attend a place of worship was almost to ostracize oneself as a lost and pagan soul.

This was the situation when the war overwhelmed us with its apparent repudiation of religion, morals and ethics. Sooner or later, seven great nations, all professedly Christian, were engaging in the most dreadful orgy of slaughter that the world had ever known, and ministers of peace were engaged in urging the conscription of others for war. Again the effect was curiously paradoxical. It is probably

true to say that the overwhelming proportion of men who were mobilized were brought into closer touch with the elements and truths of religion than they had ever been before. They had to attend a place of worship, and upon the minds of numbers an impression was clearly made. Furthermore, they came, perhaps for the first time, into association with the ministers of religion who, in the main, were admirably chosen for their work as chaplains, and the soldiers began to form an entirely new conception of these men and their mission.

On the other hand, those who remained at home were not generally moved either towards eager belief or towards scepticism. The doubter whose faith had already been shaken probably found it easier to declaim against a God who could permit such wholesale butchery of human lives, but fathers, mothers, wives, sisters and the betrothed who had always been merely indifferent towards organized religion, began, when their men were daily in the most imminent peril, to look to Christianity for their mental sustenance and solace in loss. There was no increase in faith, no suggestion of a revival, no hurrying to the Churches by those who had formerly passed the doors. A trust that men who died in battle would go to an eternal reward was, in fact, combined with a fiercely militarist spirit, and what appeared to be a righteous hatred of the Germans which was far less evident among the soldiers themselves.

The war, therefore, which found organized religion in eclipse, left it in the same state. It is possible to go to Sunday morning service at a

Nonconformist chapel in any large town and find not one in ten of the seats occupied. Leaders of the various denominations still send out their despairing messages about shrinking membership and contracting funds. Clearly, then, those returned soldiers whose minds were stirred have not been moved towards association with the Churches. Why are they, who have been impressed by the personality of such men as "Woodbine Willie," not attracted to the Churches? What is more important, why do the Churches fail to attract the multitude on the one hand and the Conquerors on the other? What, shortly, is the cause of the Churches' failure, and how is it to be overcome? That catechism cannot be answered within a short section of a book like this. A score of our leading Divines have endeavoured to supply an answer, and nearly every one has differed from the other. But there are certain broad evidences which require no elucidation from men who inhabit studies which are rarely if ever opened to the world. Such evidences spread themselves before the gaze of men who are of it. To them nothing can be clearer than the fact that the root of the issue lies in the gulf which separates the Churches from real religion. A people whose entire life is a problem and a struggle, whether with poverty or with riches, are not going to be moved by the weekly repetition of creeds and dogmas. Church divisions, insistence that a man must believe in Transubstantiation, the Apostles' Creed, Strict Baptism or the Elect of God, I have found to be held in derision by most of the non-churchgoing people to whom I have spoken, and particularly

the workers. What they who can view the present state of the country, the Empire, and the world, with equanimity, who are either indifferent to it or frankly live for the advancement and gratification of self—what they require is a great explosive mission that will shake them to a living vital sense of acute responsibility. What they who are religiously minded want is a virile social interpretation of the Bible. They despise a faith which in its organization truckles so much to wealth and power, and makes material success a subject for exaltation. Nor can such a distorted interpretation of Christianity have any other than a base influence upon the possessor of riches, making him feel secure in his possessions by whatever means he has come upon them, and failing utterly to inculcate in him a sense of the obligation of those possessions.

To the truth of all this there appears to be proceeding a gradual awakening. The National Free Church Council, in a proclamation to its constituents urging "a new evangelism," tells them that "the nation and the world are now beginning to realize that the greatest needs are the moral forces, and the goodwill that will allay animosities, and unite men and women in the reshaping of the social system on the Christian model." Well, I believe they are; I believe there is on the part of great numbers a disturbed feeling that what is wrong with the people individually and collectively needs righting, and that there is much conviction that the Christian religion and its basis provides a way of life that is a pattern for all. If the Churches can galvanize themselves into

dynamic and fearless energy, and can go out to the people untrammelled by the charge that they represent privilege, I believe there is a great amount of human material ready to respond to a faith which sets forth a plain and elevating way of life for all mankind. Taking that to the people, and teaching it free from creed, the Churches might gather a rich harvest, and definitely set the nation upon an upward march towards an inspiring and desirable goal.

Socialism in its moral aspect, and where it is insisting upon the need of a truthful and worthy personality as the precedent of material change, has already shown the way. It has found much good soil in which to fertilize the seed of a new fidelity. That seed bears fruit to-day in the shape of hundreds of men and women who give much of their leisure and their money in the effort to make the yield still greater. No close observer of the times can doubt that gradually they are succeeding in the effort.

4. *Hope is Life.*

It is time to recapitulate. This study has revealed an England in which the multitude are awakening to discontent, to discovery of a new and mighty power and determination to use it; an England, too, in which a great middle class, formerly comfortable and contented, serving England well, is now mainly penurious, insurgent, and indisposed to continue its like; and an England in which a very few hold great riches and spend them

riotously, with hardly any equivalent service. Both in the towns and the villages an age is passing; change brings a new one which is full of uncertainty. We are poised curiously and precariously in a world which seems to be in progressive disintegration. We have huge commitments, a prodigious charge upon us, and we appear to be incapable of realizing them. With all this, much that is definitely foul is countered by much that is definitely good, and if there is cause for depression, there is also cause for good cheer.

To ask, therefore, as Ruskin asked years ago, whether in England we are getting on, and if so where are we going to, is to provoke no confident assertion, either of a thunder onwards towards the death of society or a great impulse towards an era of wonderful human adventure. There are to-day disciples of Plato and Aristotle who believe profoundly in the doctrine of cyclic degeneration and decay—that each age bears within itself the seeds of its own ultimate destruction, and that after the deluge the Creator again restores the elements anew. Is this to be the fate of our capitalist and militarist civilization? Anatole France, in the *Penguin Islands*, pictures such a collapse of society through its own rottenness, and the commencement of a new life from which all the complex machinery of to-day is banished, and in which simplicity reigns.

That doctrine of convinced fatalism bears little weight to-day in a nation which can show with its folly so much of its sanity. For in this last resort, when we are endeavouring to find substantial ground upon which to build for the future,

we must, I think, take the view that in the light of all that has occurred since 1914, the wonder is not that the country is as bad as it is, but that it is as good as it is. For if we find jealousy, selfishness, indifference, crime, vice, we find also that in the heart of most human beings is, deep down hatred of it all, a desire for release, and a gradually increasing disposition to associate in common effort for human good. An observer from another planet might remark our democracy, and see in it only the material of a shapeless and incoherent mob, but the closer and more discerning observer who understands the English temperament sees great possibilities of purposeful action, and a gradually ascending will towards an England purified of a good deal that is base and wrong. An enormous amount of evil has throughout the ages been caused, not by innate wickedness, but by the fact that man has found it hard to think, and easy to act upon impulse and instinct. Impulse and instinct are sometimes discreditable qualities; sometimes they are good ones. When they produced the Inquisition they were bad; when they moved us to denounce the Armenian atrocities, they were excellent.

It is because we can pass through such an experience as that of the war seared but not devoured; that the human mind is capable of assimilating great truths and battling for them; and that instinct and impulse will still yield to reasoned guidance and self-discipline—it is because of these things that one can rightly end upon a note of hope for England. Without it, even if the outlook gave us less warrant, we should still

be called upon to hope, otherwise, shorn of its buoyancy, fears might become realities. "Pessimism," said one wise man, "is only for fools." But the call is to hope not merely because, as Home said, "Things future are the property of hope" and because hope is the very basis of life; it is also for the reason that the path to the ideal is ever open to the man or the community that will take it.

That we are suddenly, in the course of a generation, or even a century, going to achieve the millennium, is a prospect for which there is no warrant, and the notion cannot be countenanced. All the records of the past arise to discredit such a progress, to bid us go slowly if we would go surely, in our advance towards the more perfect state. For what, then, are we to hope? We are, I think, to hope for a gradual arrest of those baser human follies and excesses which were the product of relaxed discipline after the war, and to a return of that comparative tranquillity which we knew before it. Within a very few years will be arising a new generation of fresh and optimistic youth, cultured in the new atmosphere of a wider education, and untainted by the bitter disillusion of the war period, and more receptive and responsive to the nobler passions, the great inspirers, which every generation produces. The future will, I think, witness many clashes of interest in the economic sphere, but each one constituting a further step in our march to ordered association and to greater mutual aid. As in the past, new types of achievement will come to enrich the experience of the race, and they will be showered upon a

people not less, but rather more, intellectually capable of attaching them to the general good of the entire community. Looking beyond our domestic affairs to the great stretches of far continents, war for many years appears to be impossible. By the time the nations are once more restored, the very nature of its processes, and the advancing moral consciousness of the people will, I think, have done much to render another world-conflict impossible. The preservation of world-peace is the great charge upon the white races and, in a very special degree, of the English-speaking peoples. England and America are to-day the dominant races of the world. There is probably more affection than dislike between them, though, because dislike is more active, it is more manifest. It is for the men of goodwill in both countries to reverse this order. Let them radiate their affection, propagate it, and make it so strong that it submerges suspicion. Let the two nations compose their differences, admit their common bond, and allow it to weld them together in the supreme and splendid task of saving humanity from the suicide that another war would beyond doubt involve, and they will share in a wonderful service which in the passing of time can never fade, or indeed be dimmed.

Because of all these things the sensible Englishman will decline to drink the cup of despair. He will go on wending his way firmly and quietly through life, not only strong in hope, but also powerfully supported by faith—faith in his kind, in his country, and faith that though from time to time dark clouds will gather, we move not

backward, but forward, to the goal of a new, confident, understanding, communal humanity. It is in such a realization that man will find the warrant for and the solace of his striving.

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